

FISHING HOLE

LITTLE CASCADE LAKE

WHY GO: Little Cascade is mainly a northern pike lake, where numbers of the toothy fish can be caught. There's even a few bigger pike in the lake, though they are few and far between.

ACCESS: There is a carry-in access to the lake's north shore off of Forest Service Road 153. The lake is north of Lutsen.

VITALS: This 262-acre Cook County Lake has a maximum depth of nine feet.

FISH SPECIES PRESENT: Northern pike, yellow perch, white sucker, blacknose shiner, central mudminnow and Iowa darter.

LOTS OF LITTLE PIKE: A special regulation implemented in March 2003 established a 24-to-36-inch protected slot size limit, with the hopes of increasing the size structure of pike at Little Cascade. Unfortunately, that hasn't helped much in that regard, said Steve Persons, Minnesota DNR's Grand Marais area fisheries supervisor. The 2010 assessment of the lake's fishery showed no improvement in northern pike size at the lake. In that assessment, six year classes were present, including a strong 2007

year class, which showed fast growth. Those fish, three years old at the time, averaged 21.5 inches. The area average was 17 inches. But it's still a good place to catch some pike for the table.

"Certainly there are plenty of pike there under the protected slot," Persons said. "There are plenty of fish under 24 inches. That's still a nice pike for eating. There is still some opportunity there." One fish can be kept over 36 inches.

A CHANCE AT A BIG ONE: So are there any big pike in Little Cascade? Yes, said Persons. "It has the possibility," he said. "It's

not a great possibility of getting some larger fish."

In the recent 2010 survey, only one fish was sampled over 30 inches; a fish marked in the 30- to 34-inch category. The 2005 survey also had a fish in that category, and one in the next category up, from 35- to 39-inches.

PERCH NOT WORTH THE TIME: There are actually a lot of yellow perch in this lake, which, along with white suckers, are the main forage of northern pike. But most of them are small. "There are a few big ones," Persons said. Still, there are so few bigger perch in the lake, they aren't worth the effort, according to Persons.

-Javier Serna

