

# FISHING HOLE

## SOUTH FOWL LAKE



**WHY GO:** While walleye fishing is shut down most elsewhere in the state, South Fowl Lake, which sits on the Ontario border, remains open. South Fowl also has a solid population of yellow perch.

**ACCESS:** There are several ways to get to South Fowl, including a carry-in access that can be reached via snowmobile/ATV trail off South Fowl Road and the Arrowhead Trail. There's also a navigable channel connecting the lake to North Fowl Lake to the northwest. North Fowl is accessible by canoe via a portage from the Royal River. The river is reached from the Arrowhead Trail to Little John Lake to John Lake. There's also a gravel boat launch on the Ontario side of North Fowl Lake.

**VITALS:** South Fowl sits right next to the easternmost edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area

Wilderness territory but is entirely in the Superior National Forest. It's a fairly shallow lake, with a maximum depth of 10 feet, but that depth might contribute to its reputation for good early-season fishing, since it warms up faster than deeper lakes.

**SPECIES PRESENT:** The Minnesota DNR's last gillnet survey of South Fowl Lake found northern

pike, walleye, yellow perch and white sucker. It also found smallmouth bass in North Fowl Lake, so it's safe to assume they are present in South Fowl as well.

**OF NOTE:** Anglers must be properly licensed to fish in Ontario in order to fish the portion of the lake that sits in Canada.

**ALL NATURAL:** There is no record of stocking any walleyes in South Fowl, so the lake's reputed walleye fishery is supported by natural reproduction. The Minnesota DNR hasn't surveyed the lake since 1998, when a high number of walleyes were caught for a lake of its class. The DNR found quite a few year classes of walleye, a reputation that the lake has seemed to hang onto. The lake's walleyes are fast-growing, said the DNR.

**WITHSTANDING PRESSURE:** Tom Haussner, of Devil Track Lodge in Grand Marais, said the lake does get some pressure, especially before the fishing opener for the rest of the state. "It gets fished heavy especially early, but it continues to produce," Haussner said. "It's a great fishery."

**PRIME PERCH WATER:** Perhaps a reason the lake has continued to hang on to its reputation is the fish seem to grow well, likely the result of a large forage base of yellow perch from which to munch on. Haussner said the lake's yellow perch are worth targeting as well. That 1998 survey turned up a range of yellow perch from 6 to 14 inches.