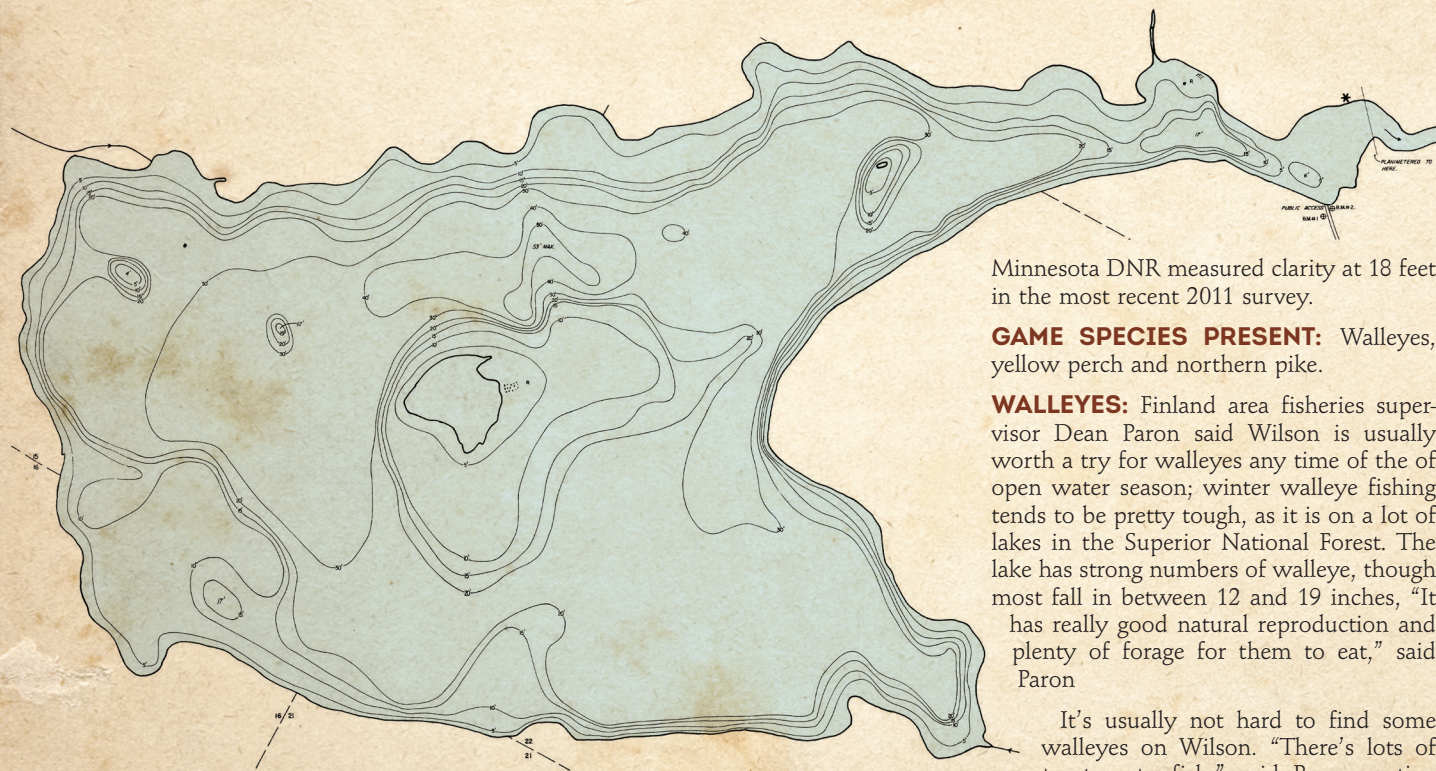


FISHING HOLE

WILSON LAKE



WHY GO: It provides consistent walleye action during the open-water season, and there are camping opportunities as well.

ACCESS: There is a concrete boat ramp and small dock at a public access on the south end of the lake, at the end of Forest

Service Road 355, which is accessed from F.S. Road 170 (Wilson Grade).

VITALS: This clear, 650-acre Lake County lake sits inside the Superior National Forest, about 11 miles northwest of Schroeder. Wilson has a maximum depth of 53 feet.

Minnesota DNR measured clarity at 18 feet in the most recent 2011 survey.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Walleyes, yellow perch and northern pike.

WALLEYES: Finland area fisheries supervisor Dean Paron said Wilson is usually worth a try for walleyes any time of the open water season; winter walleye fishing tends to be pretty tough, as it is on a lot of lakes in the Superior National Forest. The lake has strong numbers of walleye, though most fall in between 12 and 19 inches, "It has really good natural reproduction and plenty of forage for them to eat," said Paron

It's usually not hard to find some walleyes on Wilson. "There's lots of structure to fish," said Paron, noting that a favorite spot is around the big island out in the main basin and along the lake's shoreline, which has a lot of rocky substrate.

While walleyes have a lot of different options on their dinner menu, yellow perch are probably the main food source for them.

With all the food available to walleyes, it's not unheard of for fish in the upper 20-inch range to be caught, either by biologists sampling the lake or by anglers. "We hear of people catching them every now and then," Paron said.

A FEW BIG PERCH: Wilson is one of those lakes in the area that not only provide yellow perch for predators such as walleyes, but also for anglers. The most recent DNR survey, done in 2011, turned up a number of fish longer than 8 inches; even one in the 12- to 14-inch category. Paron said lately, anglers have reported doing well catching perch in the evenings.

PIKE: Because the habitat favors perch and walleye reproduction more than it does northern pike—there's not much of the early weeds pike need to spawn—the lake's northern population is not great. But there are a few of the toothy critters in the lake, even a few over 30 inches. "It would not be a species I would target," Paron said.

CAMPING: The U.S. Forest Service has a four-site rustic campground, with no fees charged, near the public access. There is a fire grate, picnic table and outhouse there, too. There is also one more campsite that is remote in the southwest corner of the lake's main basin. That site, which is accessible by boat, has a fire grate, picnic table and latrine.—Javier Serna