

# FISHING HOLE

**WHY GO:** This 403-acre Boundary Waters lake is a short trip in from the Sea Gull entry point, and offers excellent fishing for walleye, smallmouth bass and northern pike. There's even an abundant lake whitefish population believed to still be in the lake.

**ACCESS:** The quickest way in is the 100-rod portage from the northwest corner of Sea Gull Lake (resist the urge to try the shorter stream portage also in the same general vicinity). That does mean a solid paddle from the east side of Sea Gull, of which the far west basin can get a little dicey in the right (or wrong) wind.

There are also portages from Jasper Lake (for those travelling in from the west from Ogishkemuncie) and from Red Rock Lake (for those coming in from the north and Saganaga Lake's Red Rock Bay.

**VITALS:** This 403-acre lake has a maximum depth of 65 feet, according to Minnesota DNR's Lakefinder data. For such a small lake, it can be confusing because of its irregular shoreline and many islands. In fact, the state says it has almost 24 miles of shoreline, and I've on more than one occasion had to point canoers in the right direction on this lake.

**GAME SPECIES PRESENT:** Lake whitefish, northern pike, smallmouth bass, walleye and white sucker.

**FINDING WALTER:** I've personally had some great days of walleye fishing, with

both a jig and a leech and slip bobber, but most of these have been in the heat of summer, when walleyes in this area can be quite active.

I've had more trouble getting them to bite in later September and October, though I've heard that some locals do get them dialed in this time of year. I would assume, at that point, the fish are in water deeper than 20 feet and a bit more scattered, but this knowledge has not produced many walleyes in the fall for me.

I much prefer working for them from an island or campsite with a nice drop-off in the mornings and evenings, with a nice wind blowing in.

**SOME DECENT PIKE:** DNR's most recent fisheries survey of the lake in 2002, said northern pike growth rates may be fast in Alpine, noting their access to lake whitefish or perhaps cisco.

A couple members of my canoe camp have lost some mighty pike on this lake over the years, including two fish likely longer than 40 inches.

In both cases, the anglers were not using steel leaders, and they were cut off by the toothy predators eventually, including one friend who had been tossing a fancy, BB-filled jerkbait that he was able to retrieve. We heard the fish for a while as it shook it's head violently with the rattling bait in its mouth. Eventually, the bait was floating on the surface.

## ALPINE LAKE

The other time, my brother had been tossing a white and red Beetle Spin when a giant pike snatched up the offering. I got one good look at the fish, which was well out of arm's reach boat side, before slicing the line. Had we packed a landing net, we'd have had a chance at it.

Otherwise, we've caught a fair number of eater-sized pike from Alpine over the years.

**SMALLMOUTHS:** Alpine has no shortage of smallies in it, and during those fall trips, I often have to settle for keeping a few when the walleyes refuse to cooperate.

There are many downed trees along Alpine's main shore and islands, providing that woody cover that smallmouth love to use as an ambush point.

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Just remember to pack some tube baits and several of your favorite topwater baits.  
—Javier Serna