

FISHING HOLE

WHY GO: Fish Lake Flowage is a go-to option for some nice walleyes during the open-water months and just as reliable almost year-round for those that can keep tabs on crappies. There's also the chance at catching bluegills, largemouth bass and northern pike on this sizeable reservoir north of Duluth.

ACCESS: There's two public accesses. The High Banks ramp (on the lake's north shore) is on C.R. 285, and is accessed from C.R. 48, about 9.5 miles north of Duluth. The Fish Lake public access (on the western arm of the lake) is accessed from C.R. 15, about 12 miles north of Duluth. You'll turn right on Bachelor Road (5641) and right on Esker Trail.

VITALS: This 3,071-acre St. Louis County Lake is north of Duluth. It has nearly 45 miles of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 36 feet, though its mean depth is calculated at 9.2 feet according to Minnesota DNR's LakeFinder page.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Black crappie, bluegill, channel catfish, largemouth bass, northern pike, pumpkinseed, rock bass, walleye, white sucker and yellow perch.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PRESENT: Spiny water flea

WALLEYES HELPED BY SLOT: John Chalstrom of Chalstrom's Bait (218-726-0094) in Duluth said the lake's walleye population has really come back strong following the implemented recommendations of a 13- to 17-inch slot limit about six years ago. One fish over 26 inches is also allowed in possession. Walleyes between 22 and 24 inches are commonly caught now.

"It doesn't hurt my feelings to unhook those guys and throw them back in the lake," he said.

Chalstrom said his favorite time of the year to target Fish Lake walleyes is in June with leeches.

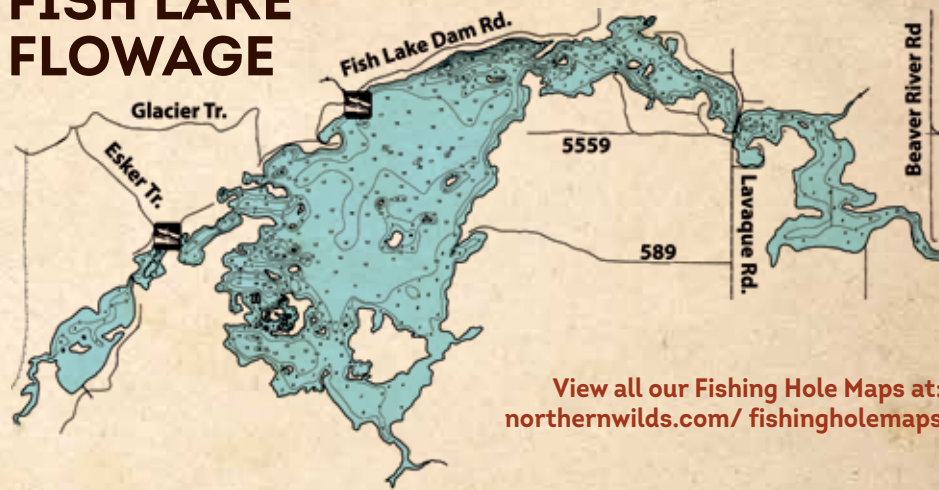
"You go there with a half pound of leeches and you'll be catching them all day," he said, noting that his preferred method is with some split shot and a spinner rig, slowly trolling, though slip bobbers or jigs can also be effective.

That's a safe bet in the 15-foot depths, he said, but in late summer, some anglers head to the lake to target the big walleyes with stickbaits in the deeper parts of the lake.

The walleye bite tails off quickly in the winter, Chalstrom said, once there's about a foot of ice and some snow atop of it.

"Around Thanksgiving, on a good early winter, you get out on the first solid ice of

FISH LAKE FLOWAGE



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the season and you can do so good on the walleyes," he said. "Once that snow starts stacking up on the ice, it shifts to a night crappie bite."

CRAPPIE TIME NOW (AND MOST OF THE YEAR): Chalstrom said the winter crappie bite gets hit hard at night by locals. Some of that fishing can be rather late.

Glow jigs and crappie minnows seem to be the ticket most of the time, he said.

And crappies are a good bet for those that can track them down most of the open-water season, as well, he said.

Boaters were getting at them on a daily basis this fall, with crappie jigs and minnows

effective often in 15 to 20 feet of water. Electronics are helpful in locating crappies, which often suspend and can be mobile.

THE REST: Chalstrom said there's some decent bluegill action in the spring time.

"Not too many people target them," he said.

There are also a few largemouth bass in the lake, but it's not a main target species and the population is not thought to be real big. Northern pike are worth targeting throughout the open-water season, he said, with a fair number of 3- and 4-pounders.
-Javier Serna