

FISHING HOLE

HOGBACK LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Hogback Lake is one of the most popular designated trout lakes in the Finland area. Rainbow trout and splake are stocked annually, with splake sometimes topping 20 inches.

ACCESS: Hogback Lake lies 12 miles east of Isabella on USFS Road 172 (Wanless Road). The lake features a USFS fishing pier, a gravel boat ramp, three roadside campsites and a remote campsite. In addition, hiking trails wrap around the lake and nearby Scarp Lake. The shoreline is entirely publicly owned.

VITALS: Hogback Lake is like having two lakes in one. The entire lake encompasses 40 acres. The main lake (where the boat landing is) is shallower and larger. If you head south, you can squeeze through a shallow, narrow channel. This part of the lake (sometimes called Canal Lake) is only 14 acres, but it bottoms out at 43 feet. Trout can be found in both basins.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Rainbow trout, splake, and yellow perch.

RAINBOW TROUT: "Hogback has been traditionally one of our stronger trout fisheries," said Dean Paron, Finland Area Fisheries Supervisor. Paron said each spring, the DNR stocks 1,000 rainbow trout yearlings that measure about 10 to 12 inches when stocked. These are already of harvestable size when trout season opens in May.

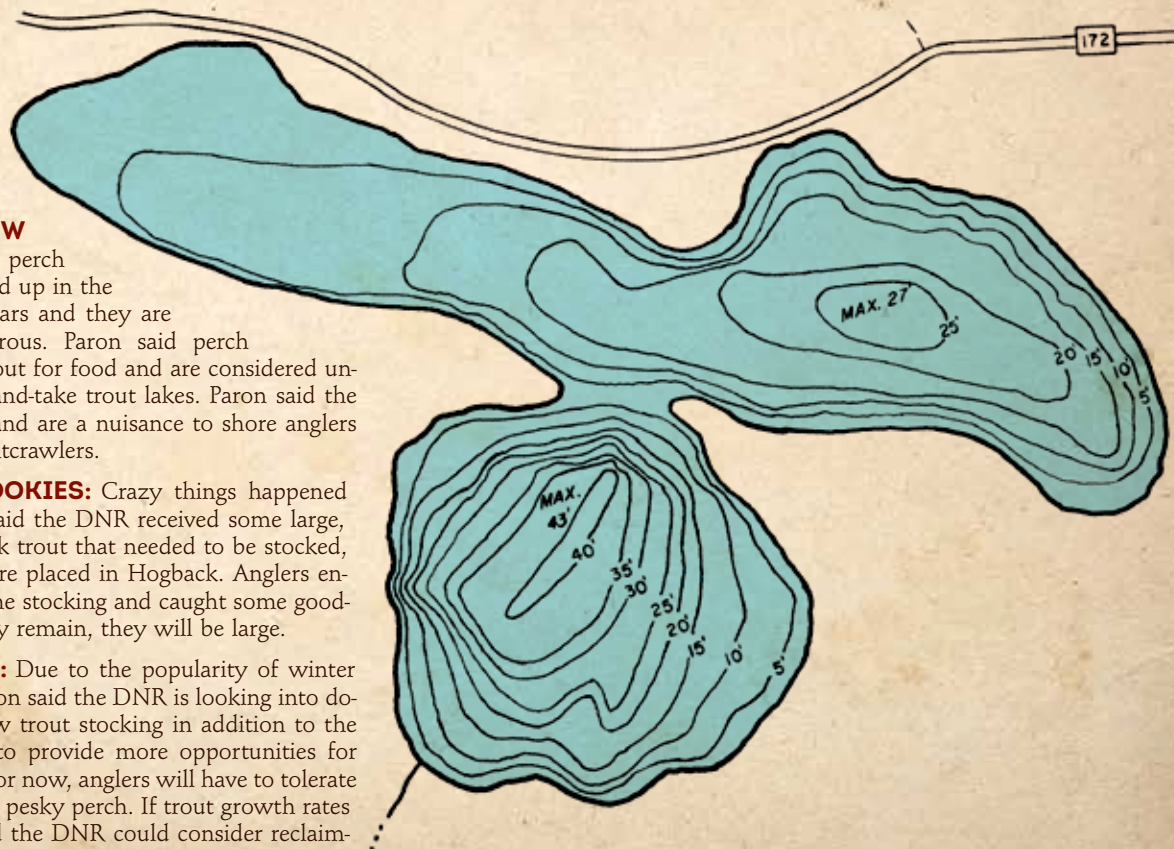
SPLAKE: Splake can grow large in Hogback. Each fall, 4,000 splake fingerlings measuring about

6 inches are stocked. Wary specimens can grow to 20 inches or more if they avoid anglers.

YELLOW PERCH: Yellow perch somehow showed up in the lake in recent years and they are becoming numerous. Paron said perch compete with trout for food and are considered undesirable in put-and-take trout lakes. Paron said the perch are small and are a nuisance to shore anglers fishing with nightcrawlers.

BONUS BROOKIES: Crazy things happened in 2020. Paron said the DNR received some large, 1.5-year-old brook trout that needed to be stocked, so about 300 were placed in Hogback. Anglers enjoyed the one-time stocking and caught some good-sized trout. If any remain, they will be large.

THE FUTURE: Due to the popularity of winter trout fishing, Paron said the DNR is looking into doing a fall rainbow trout stocking in addition to the spring stocking to provide more opportunities for winter anglers. For now, anglers will have to tolerate Hogback's small, pesky perch. If trout growth rates suffer, Paron said the DNR could consider reclaiming the lake.



View all our Fishing Hole Maps at:
northernwilds.com/fishingholemaps