

FISHING HOLE KING LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: If you're looking to fish an untapped lake within an hour's drive of Duluth, King Lake may be just the ticket. You can get back in the boonies, enjoy some good walleye, bass and pike fishing and be back home in time for supper.

ACCESS: Getting to King Lake is a challenge. You'll have to do some off-roading to get there and once there, you'll only be able to launch a canoe, kayak or a cartopper-style rowboat, but that's part of the fun. From Duluth, head north on Jean Duluth Road for about 8 miles, then turn right onto Normanna Road. Proceed northeast on Normanna, which soon turns into Pequaywan Lake Road. Travel about 18 miles, then turn right on Rossini Road. Go about 1.3 miles and turn left. Here, the road splits. Take the right fork at the arrow pointing toward King Lake. You'll be driving down logging roads that are sometimes rutted up and full of water, so a four-wheel-drive vehicle is advisable. Go 2.3 miles, then left at a narrow logging road. From there, it's about a tenth of a mile to the lake. Pull up a map on your phone to help you navigate the logging roads to the south end of the lake once you leave Rossini Road. It would be a good idea to download a map of the

area ahead of time because cell reception is spotty in the area.

VITALS: King Lake is 317 acres with a maximum depth of 8 feet. There's a muddy carry-down access with parking for one vehicle. The south end of the lake is undeveloped, but there are some cabins on the larger north end. Due to its remoteness and lack of fishing pressure, the lake was last surveyed in 1997, so the fishery may have changed somewhat over the years.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Walleye, northern pike, largemouth bass and yellow perch.

WALLEYE: According to the 1997 survey, King offers a very good walleye fishery. Walleyes are abundant, fast-growing and of good average size. More than half of the walleyes sampled in that survey measured 15 inches or greater, and fish topped 16 inches in just four years. Due to the lake's shallow nature, fish shouldn't be hard to find, but the water is clear, so fishing during low-light periods will probably be your best bet.

NORTHERN PIKE: The northern pike fishery is similar. They're found in high abundance, but their average size isn't too bad. Mean size was nearly 22 inches, and fish grow quickly, with an occasional pike

topping 30 inches. More than 60 percent of the fish sampled were 21 inches or longer.

LARGEMOUTH BASS: Bass are usually too smart to be caught in nets and are best surveyed by electrofishing. However, some largemouths were sampled in that old survey, with one notable fish topping 20 inches. It's likely there is a fairly good bass fishery in King Lake.

YELLOW PERCH: Yellow perch inhabit King in average numbers. They likely provide forage for pike and walleyes, although a few reach the keeper-size for anglers.

