

FISHING HOLE

TAIT LAKE

WHY GO: Tait Lake has a fairly good population of walleyes and northern pike. It has a good concrete ramp that can accommodate motorboats (although a fair amount of anglers fish the lake via canoe or kayak). Plus, it's a shallow lake that is relatively easy for anglers to figure out.

ACCESS: Anglers can access Tait Lake by driving 10 miles north of Lutsen on County Road 4 (Caribou Trail) and then turning left and traveling 6 miles on Clara Lake Road. Then turn right on Tait Lake Road and follow it to the end. There is a concrete slab ramp on the southeast corner of the lake with parking for about a half-dozen rigs.

VITALS: Tait Lake is 355 acres with a maximum depth of 15 feet. The lake has slightly bog-stained water with 7.5 feet of visibility. The lake is shallow and rocky and has good walleye habitat. Despite the good boat ramp, the lake receives only moderate fishing pressure. The lake has a fair number of cabins and development has been increasing in recent years.

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

WALLEYE: "It's been known as a pretty decent walleye lake for many years," said Matthew Weberg, assistant area fisheries manager in Grand Marais. "There's pretty

strong, consistent natural reproduction. Walleyes are small to medium, although there's certainly opportunities for fish over 20 inches." Walleyes were first stocked in Tait in 1939 and have been entirely self-sustaining since 1967. Despite Tait's consistently good walleye population, the most recent DNR survey in 2017 found the lowest number of walleyes ever sampled in the lake, with the lowest average weight ever observed there.

NORTHERN PIKE: Pike are the secondary management species in Tait Lake. "Northern pike have been a little bit variable over time, but for the most part, have stayed at the goal we have for the lake," Weberg said. He said most of the pike you'll encounter are in the 20- to 30-inch range, although he noted pike don't usually exceed 30 inches.

YELLOW PERCH: "Yellow perch provide a really good forage base for pike and walleyes and occasionally we'll see some larger fish that would be of interest to anglers," Weberg said. The latest survey found the highest gill net catch ever observed in Tait. Surveys usually find a few perch topping 10 inches, and occasionally over 12.

BONUS BLUEGILLS: Tait has a low-den-



sity population of bluegills and some small pumpkinseeds. Some of the bluegills are nice, but the pumpkinseeds are usually tiny.

SENTINEL LAKE: Tait Lake is a sentinel lake. "The sentinel lake program is basically trying to track long-term changes in the state's lakes at a little bit higher resolution than we normally would," Weberg said. These lakes are sampled more frequently and are also monitored for water temperature, water chemistry and small organisms, in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Tait was declared a senti-

nel lake in 2009 and was sampled in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017 to establish baseline information. Lake monitoring will now be scaled back to every five years going forward.

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