

FISHING HOLE

TWO ISLAND LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Don't believe everything you hear: there are more than two islands on Two Island Lake. However, you'll definitely find a scenic lake with good populations of smallmouth bass and walleyes, as well as a Forest Service campground.

ACCESS: Two Island Lake is located about 15 miles northwest of Grand Marais. From Grand Marais, head north on County Road 12 (Gunflint Trail) for 3.7 miles. Turn left onto County Road 8 (Devil Track Road) and proceed 6 miles. Turn right onto County Road 27 (Ball Club Road) and take it for 4 miles to the campground on your left.

VITALS: Two Island Lake covers 753 acres and has a maximum depth of 27 feet. A 38-site U.S. Forest Service fee campground sits on the east end of the lake. Within it, you'll find a picnic area and a concrete boat launch with parking for 16 trailers. Sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

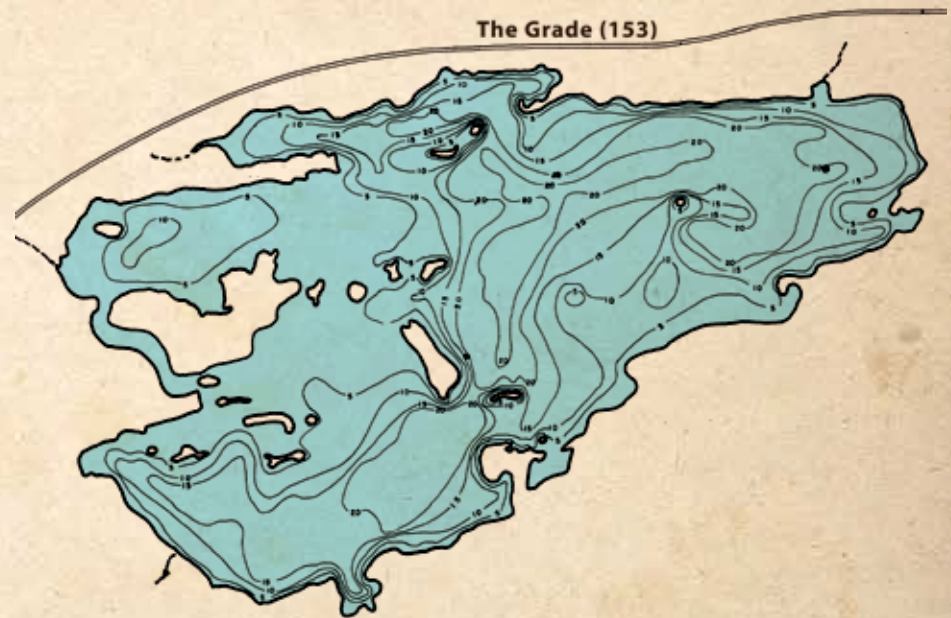
GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Smallmouth bass, walleye, northern pike, bluegill, and yellow perch.

SMALLMOUTH BASS: Anglers will find a very good smallmouth bass fishery here, and there's plenty of structure to hold bronzebacks. The lake is shallow and rocky, and there's even some wood in the lake, left

over from logging days. "Our mean weight of smallmouth bass has gone from well under a pound to over 2 pounds per fish now," said Matthew Weberg, assistant area fisheries supervisor in Grand Marais. "They are popular with a lot of folks that visit the lake." Since 1996, the lake has had a special slot limit to protect adult smallies. Originally, the lake had a protected slot from 12 to 20 inches, but that regulation was modified a few years ago. Presently, anglers must release any bass between 14 and 20 inches. One trophy fish over 20 inches may be kept, or anglers may harvest the normal six-fish limit, as long as they measure under 14 inches.

WALLEYE: Walleyes may be overshadowed by the lake's smallmouths, but walleyes are worth fishing for in their own right. Weberg said the lake is a high-quality walleye lake with consistently strong natural reproduction. Most of the walleyes you'll find are good-sized eaters, with few topping 20 inches.

NORTHERN PIKE: You won't find a robust pike population, but northern pikes are still present in decent numbers. They grow faster than average and have the potential to put a real bend in your rod. "It has about average, maybe a little bit below average abundance, but it has some size component—up to 30 inches," Weberg said of the pike fishery.



BLUEGILLS: Bluegills aren't common in Cook County, but you may find some in Two Island. "Bluegills were first found in 1989 (in Two Island Lake) and likely came downstream from Pit Lake," Weberg said. "They've kind of hung in there, but in the last three surveys, they've started to pick up a little bit. They're reproducing on their own with decent survival." Although they're not highly

abundant, you may find some keepers topping 8 inches.

YELLOW PERCH: Perch are found in low numbers. "It's not known as a great perch fishing lake," Weberg said, "but there are some quality-sized fish over 9 inches."

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