

FISHING HOLE T LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: If you're looking for a fun lake that's out of the way and has a good population of walleyes, T Lake will suit you to a T!

ACCESS: T Lake is accessible only by portage; there's no direct access. However, for the motivated, carrying a canoe for a short hike will get you away from the crowds and into some good fishing. You can access the lake two ways. From Finland, travel east, then mostly north on Lake County Highway 7 for approximately 30 miles. The road takes a few jogs, but just stay on 7. There's a small parking lot with a 0.5-mile portage trail to the lake off Lake County Road 7. In some places, the trail is steep and dotted with boulders. The easier access is via a 0.2-mile portage trail from the east side of Silver Island Lake. Snowmobile use is permitted on these trails, but ATV use is not.

VITALS: T Lake encompasses 295 acres and has a maximum depth of 15 feet. Two campsites accessible only by water greet the ambitious. These free sites are available to the first ones to claim them each day.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Walleye, black crappie, northern pike, yellow perch and lake whitefish.

WALLEYE: "T is kind of a nice lake that has a good, naturally reproducing walleye

population," said Dean Paron, Finland Area Fisheries Supervisor. "Numbers bounce up and down from a little below average to a little above average." The latest survey in 2019 found the highest walleye numbers of the previous seven surveys at 10 walleyes per gill net. Walleyes tend to be on the small side. Average size was 12.8 inches, but only 16 percent of the walleyes surveyed were over 15 inches. However, Paron said the walleye fishing is pretty good. "T is managed for a remote walleye experience," he said, "with decent numbers and a very catchable population." The lake's shallowness makes it relatively easy for anglers to find fish. "Because it's a little harder to get to, it doesn't get as much fishing pressure as Silver Island or Windy," Paron said. However, he noted that he's heard reports of people using ATVs to access the lake, which isn't permitted.

BLACK CRAPPIE: Crappies aren't super abundant in the Finland area, but crappie anglers may find some good fishing on T. "Average size is good," Paron said. "The population could be better than our gear shows. There have been some reports of anglers having some good crappie fishing." The latest survey certainly looks promising for crappie anglers. Average size in the latest survey was 11.6 inches and 40 percent of the catch was over 12 inches. Paron noted that

natural reproduction tends to be sporadic with crappies, so the population may cycle up and down.

NORTHERN PIKE:

"Generally pike are kind of a bycatch," Paron said. Pike numbers are usually low and their size is small. The last survey turned up only 13 pike with an average size of 19.3 inches, which was skewed upward by the catching of one pike that measured nearly 33 inches. You may catch a few pike while fishing for walleyes, but don't expect the fishing to be fantastic.

LAKE WHITEFISH: Historically, lake whitefish were present in good numbers in T Lake. However, numbers seem to be declining, and in 2019, only one whitefish was found. At 15 feet deep max, the lake is quite shallow to support whitefish.



YELLOW PERCH: Yellow perch dwell in T in average numbers and serve as good forage for walleyes and northern pike. Generally small, few of them reach sizes big enough to interest anglers.

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