

FISHING HOLE

PERENT LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Perent Lake has a high population of small, eater-sized walleyes. It's not particularly hard to get to, requiring a 3-mile paddle down Hog Creek, and some anglers make a day trip in to fish it. It's a nice beginner's Boundary Waters destination. "It's not a lake that hardcore wilderness folks think of because it's only one step in, but because of the creek, it's kind of an adventure to get in there," said Kevin Mott, assistant area supervisor at the Finland fisheries office.

ACCESS: Perent Lake is accessible only by portage and you'll need the appropriate Boundary Waters permit. Put in at the Hog Creek entry point (Number 36) and paddle 3 miles downstream to reach Perent Lake. There's a short 15-rod portage from the parking lot to the creek, and you'll certainly have a short portage around a beaver dam or two. In wet or normal years, the float is fairly easy. However, if the water is low, numerous rocks in the shallow, windy creek makes reaching the lake a challenge. Alternatively, you can reach Perent Lake from Isabella Lake, but it's a long trip via the Perent River, requiring several portages. To reach the Hog Creek entry point from Tofte, proceed north up the Sawbill Trail (County Highway 2) for 17 miles. Turn left onto Perent Lake Road (County Highway 3). After about 8 miles,

County 3 changes into County 7, but keep going. After a total of about 10 miles on Perent Lake Road, turn right onto Kawishiwi Lake Road (Forest Road 354). Proceed about 2 miles and you'll see the Hog Creek parking area on the left. There's a nice parking lot here with space for about a dozen vehicles.

VITALS: Perent Lake is a fair-sized lake at 1,598 acres and with a maximum depth of 38 feet. The lake has 19 campsites; some on the mainland, some on islands. Because it's a long distance via the Perent River to Isabella Lake, Perent Lake is the final destination for most visitors.

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

WALLEYE: "It's got good natural reproduction," said Dean Paron, Finland area fisheries supervisor. "Walleyes tend to be small." Most walleyes you'll encounter will be in the 12- to 16-inch range, although occasionally, they top 25 inches. With plenty of islands and points, you can often catch walleyes right from your campsite, which is good, because the lake is large enough that if the wind picks up, paddling can be difficult.

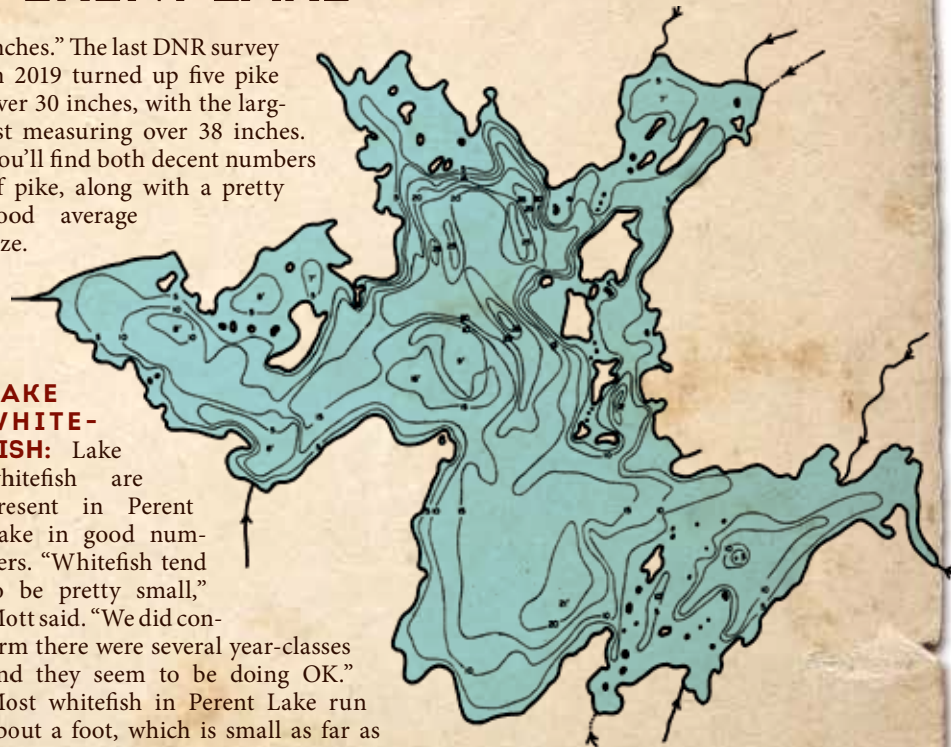
NORTHERN PIKE: "A lot of our lakes in our area don't get tons of big pike, but when you do get one, they can be fairly nice," Mott said. "There are a fair number of fish over 24

inches." The last DNR survey in 2019 turned up five pike over 30 inches, with the largest measuring over 38 inches. You'll find both decent numbers of pike, along with a pretty good average size.

LAKE WHITEFISH:

Lake whitefish are present in Perent Lake in good numbers. "Whitefish tend to be pretty small," Mott said. "We did confirm there were several year-classes and they seem to be doing OK." Most whitefish in Perent Lake run about a foot, which is small as far as whitefish go. Although anglers catch them infrequently, whitefish likely serve as excellent pike forage.

YELLOW PERCH: You may run across a perch or two while you're fishing a live-bait rig for walleyes. "Some of the perch get to the size that people would include them in



their shore lunch," Mott said, describing them as a "bonus" for walleye anglers.

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