

FISHING HOLE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Scarp Lake offers quality rainbow trout fishing in a scenic setting. “As a camping experience, it doesn’t take a lot of effort to get there, but when you get there, it still has that solitude,” said Dean Paron, Finland area fisheries supervisor.

ACCESS: Scarp Lake is part of the Hogback Lake Recreation Area—a unique cluster of lakes connected by 5 miles of hiking trails with a few campsites thrown in for good measure. Anglers can reach Scarp Lake via a quarter-mile hiking trail or by paddling across Hogback Lake and making a 20-rod portage into Scarp. You’ll find a small, three-site rustic campground with a day-use picnic area on Hogback Lake. Scarp has two remote campsites—one on the west end of the lake and another on the north-central part of the lake. These sites can be reached on foot or by canoe. A hiking trail goes all the way around the lake, providing a few shore fishing access points. If you’re planning to camp on any of these lakes, try to get there early. “It gets a fair amount of recreational use, especially early in the spring,” Paron said. “It’s popular with tent campers.”

To reach the parking area at Hogback Lake from Tofte, travel southwest on U.S. High-

way 61 for 2.4 miles, crossing the Temperance River. Just past the river, turn right onto FR 343 (Temperance River Road). Follow FR 343 just over 5 miles until you come to an intersection. Turn left on FR 166 and proceed about 1.8 miles to County Road 7 (Cramer Road). Turn right onto County Road 7 and proceed about 5.6 miles until you reach FR 172 at Charity Lake. Turn left onto FR 172 (Wanless Road) and proceed about three-quarters of a mile. Turn into the Hogback Lake parking lot on your left.

VITALS: Scarp Lake spans 39 acres with a maximum depth of 15 feet. It’s named for the rocky escarpment you’ll find along the lake.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Rainbow trout.

RAINBOW TROUT: Rainbow trout are the only gamefish species in Scarp Lake. “We stock it annually with yearling (10- to 12-inch) rainbow trout,” Paron said. “We boat them in from Hogback and stock them in spring every year. It’s pretty popular with anglers. When we survey, we get good numbers in each age-class, which is kind of unusual. Several anglers like to target Scarp specifically for the larger rainbows,” Paron continued. “They seem to grow a bit bigger for whatever reason.” Paron said it’s a fairly



productive lake, with more nutrients than a typical stocked trout lake, which probably aids their growth. He noted he’s heard of rainbows up to about 18 inches coming out of the lake. Scarp sees a lot of campers in the spring and summer, but it also gets pressure from anglers on snowmobiles or snowshoes in winter. “It’s a neat little gem,” Paron said.

BONUS TROUT: Hogback and Steer lakes are connected to Scarp via hiking trail.

Both are designated trout lakes. Hogback has rainbows and splake, while Steer Lake is stocked annually with brook trout. “A large portion of the anglers that fish on Scarp also fish on Hogback,” Paron said. So, if the fish aren’t biting on Scarp, you’ve got other options close by.

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