

FISHING HOLE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Pakashkan Lake harbors angling opportunities for above-average-sized walleyes and northern pike in a wilderness-like setting.

ACCESS: The lake lies about a two-hour drive northwest of Thunder Bay. There are two access points. The first is at Pakashkan Lake Lodge in the middle basin on the southern end of the lake. From Thunder Bay, travel west on Trans-Canada Highway/Ontario Highway 17 for 95 miles. Turn right onto Graham Road and travel for 31 miles. Finally, turn left on Lodge Road and proceed 1.5 miles to the lodge. Alternatively, keep going on Graham Road and proceed past Lodge Road another 2 miles, then turn left onto Weaver Road and proceed to the lake. Crown Land camping is available at both sites. Once you leave the Trans-Canada Highway, travel is very rough. Go slowly, cover your boat, and it wouldn't be a bad idea to have tow flaps or other protection for your boat.

VITALS: Pakashkan Lake is a sprawling 13,141-acre lake with a maximum depth of 70 feet. It is made up of three distinct basins. There is a lodge and a few cabins, but otherwise it is largely undeveloped. Although the lodge does put out jugs to mark some of the nearby reefs, many rocks are unmarked and

boating can be hazardous. Go slowly and watch for rocks.

GAME SPECIES PRESENT: Walleye and northern pike.

WALLEYE: Most anglers who visit Pakashkan are there for walleyes. The lake coughs up good numbers of eater-sized fish, with a chance at a trophy over 30 inches always a possibility. Look for walleyes along weeds or rocks. The bite is best on Pakashkan early and late in the day. Bring plenty of minnows if you're planning to fish live bait because bait is hard to come by and expensive. Alternatively, jigs with plastics catch plenty of fish.

NORTHERN PIKE: Pike are numerous, sometimes to the chagrin of walleye anglers, as they frequently bite off lures. However, many anglers come to Pakashkan with the hope of catching a real lunker pike. Giants in the mid- to upper-40-inch range are out there for lucky or dedicated anglers, and you're sure to tangle with lots of smaller pike as well. You can catch plenty of pike on walleye rods pitching spoons or spinners, but if you're after a real giant, break out the muskie rod and industrial-sized lures. Weedy bays with inflowing water are good bets any time, but especially in spring. For big fish, try deep weed edges.



PAKASHKAN LAKE

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