

FISHING HOLE

FREAR LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Frear Lake is part of the Timber-Frear Loop, which is a semi-wilderness loop of seven lakes connected by portages. A limited number of primitive campsites are available, with other rustic campgrounds located nearby. Unlike the Boundary Waters, no permits are required and motors are allowed, however, the accesses are not suitable for large boats, so most anglers fish from a canoe or small boat. The lakes are known for good numbers of eater-sized walleyes in a near-wilderness setting.

ACCESS: There is direct access to Frear Lake, or you can reach the lake from a 59-rod portage from Timber Lake to the east, or a 128-rod portage from Lost Lake to the south. You're going to have to want to reach the lake because the direct accesses are difficult. From Schroeder, head northeast up Highway 61 for 1.2 miles. Turn left onto Temperance Road (FR 343) and proceed 5.1 miles. Turn left onto FR 166 and proceed for 2.2 miles. Turn right onto FR 1855 and proceed northwest for 5.3 miles. Turn right onto FR 170 and proceed for 0.2 miles before making a quick left onto FR 348. Continue on FR 348 for 5.7 miles. Turn right onto FR 1271 and continue until the road crosses the

eastern end of Frear Lake. FR 1271 is a very narrow, rough road, best suited to an ATV. Alternatively, stay on FR 348 and continue north beyond FR 1271. You'll find a 0.25-mile trail heading east toward Frear Lake, near the outlet from Organ Lake. This narrow trail is best suited to portaging on foot.

VITALS: Frear Lake is a 316-acre lake with a maximum depth of 17 feet and water clarity of 7 feet. The lake has three campsites: two on the west shore and one on the southeast shore. It's composed mostly of rock, with some vegetation in the northern part of the lake.

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

WALLEYE: Most anglers who fish the Timber-Frear Loop are after walleyes, and the fishing doesn't disappoint. Anglers will find above-average numbers of walleyes in these lakes, with most being desirable eater-sized walleyes, measuring from 13 to 16 inches. The lake is sustained through natural reproduction and recruitment is consistent. The oldest walleye in the most recent DNR survey was 15 years old. You won't find any trophies here, as only one walleye in that survey measured more than 20 inches, but

anglers should have ample opportunity to catch a shore lunch.

NORTHERN PIKE: Northern pike are of secondary interest. Their numbers aren't particularly high and their size tends to be lacking. Most fish will measure in the upper teens to the lower 20s. Don't expect to encounter any lunkers. If you've got your heart set on pike, fish the weedy areas, particularly on the north end of the lake.

YELLOW PERCH: Perch are present in the system, but they are best utilized as forage for pike and walleyes. You're not likely to catch any that are big enough to eat.

MAKE IT A TRIP: The Timber-Frear Loop is a good alternative to a trip in the Boundary Waters. You'll find comparable fishing and scenic camping, without the need for a permit. And you may be able to get a small motorboat into the lakes. You'll find rustic campsites with a fire ring and latrine like you would in the Boundary Waters at each campsite. If



you can't get a campsite, or are looking for some easier access, you'll find four rustic campgrounds in the area that you can drive to at Whitefish Lake, Windy Lake, Fourmile Lake, and Toohey Lake.

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