

FISHING HOLE

HOMER LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: About two-thirds of Homer Lake lies outside the Boundary Waters, so anglers can ply its waters with motorboats. Although most people are just passing through, the lake does offer some good walleye fishing.

ACCESS: Homer Lake is located just south of Brule Lake. It's Boundary Waters entry point number 40. From Lutsen, proceed about a mile northeast up Highway 61. Turn left onto Cook County Highway 4 (Caribou Trail) and head north about 17 miles to the intersection with Cook County Highway 165 (The Grade). Turn left and proceed about 1.5 miles. Turn right onto Brule Lake Road (Cook County Highway 326) and proceed about 4 miles. Then turn left down a short road to the lake. The boat access has a concrete slab ramp and an out-house.

VITALS: Homer Lake is 434 acres with a maximum depth of 22 feet. Most of the lake is less than 15 feet deep. The lake is bog-stained and water clarity is about 7 feet. There are two campsites on the lake: one inside the Boundary Waters and one outside.

GAMEFISH SPECIES PRESENT: Walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass, and yellow perch.

WALLEYE: Most anglers who visit Homer Lake are after walleyes. This species is present in good numbers, thanks to consistent natural reproduction. Fish tend to be slow growing and can be long-lived: the 2022 DNR survey found a walleye that was 22 years old! This is a good lake for eater-sized walleyes. The last survey had an average length of 14 inches. Most fish are under 20 inches, but occasionally one in the low 20s turns up.

NORTHERN PIKE: Although northern pike are a secondary management species, the pike fishery is nothing to write home about. Pike tend to be small—generally under 20 inches—and they aren't overly abundant. They are short-lived here, meaning they never live long enough to grow of much size. Prey species are lacking, and pike probably feed most commonly on small perch.

SMALLMOUTH BASS: Smallies found their way into Homer Lake in the late 1990s and are now well established. Some fair-sized fish are present here, measuring in

the mid-teens. Smallies are at home on the lake's ample rock reefs.

YELLOW PERCH: Perch are present in low to average numbers, but they tend to be small. They serve as better forage for pike and walleyes than for anglers.

OTHER SPECIES: Although Homer's primary species are listed above, you may encounter some other species, including bluegills, pumpkinseeds, and eelpout. Rock bass also recently made their way into the lake.

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