

FISHING HOLE

TOOHEY LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Toohey Lake offers good numbers of eater-sized walleyes on a small, quiet lake. The landing is extremely shallow, which limits anglers to canoes or very small boats. A seven-site National Forest rustic campground is located near the boat access.

ACCESS: From Tofte, head north on the Sawbill Trail (Cook County Highway 2) for 15 miles. Turn left onto The Grade (Forest Road 170) and travel 5 miles. The lake is right along the road, on the right.

VITALS: Toohey Lake spans 369 acres and has a maximum depth of 11 feet. The water is stained brown and average water clarity is 5.7 feet. Free campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a dock and an outhouse, but no drinking water. The water is knee deep for about 100 yards off the access and my 16-foot boat won't float off the trailer, so you'll be limited to canoes or a small boat you can muscle off the trailer. The long, sandy bar rings the shoreline, which really makes shore fishing impractical.

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

WALLEYE: Walleyes are the main attraction for most anglers on Toohey Lake. They are found here in high density and the average size is quite good. The 2020 DNR lake assessment found a whopping 27.6 walleyes per gill net. Most fish are in the perfect "eater" range of 14 to 17 inches. Don't expect to catch any trophies, but once in a while, a fish in the mid-20-inch range shows up.

YELLOW PERCH: Although most anglers target walleyes on Toohey, it's not uncommon to catch perch on walleye tackle, and the lake's perch run large. The latest DNR survey caught 11.4 perch per gill net lift, and more than half of the catch exceeded 10 inches, with several perch topping the foot mark. There are some quality perch to be had!

NORTHERN PIKE: Northern pike are present in below-average numbers for the Finland area and they are extremely small. You would be hard-pressed to catch a pike worth filleting.



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