

# FISHING HOLE

## LAKE GEGOKA

BY JOE SHEAD

**WHY GO:** Lake Gegoka offers above average-sized northern pike and walleyes and a growing panfish component, all in a scenic setting. The lake has a decent boat launch that accommodates most area fishing boats.

**ACCESS:** Gegoka is a middle-of-nowhere kind of lake, located west of Isabella, but there are good paved roads all the way to the lake. From Finland, head north on Lake County Highway 1, passing through Isabella. Travel 23 miles, then turn right onto the short spur road to the boat access. There's a gravel ramp with parking for about nine trailers, although you likely won't encounter many other boaters.

**VITALS:** Lake Gegoka spans 145 acres with a maximum depth of 10 feet and average water clarity of 5 feet. There are some cabins on the lake. The oddly shaped lake has three distinct basins connected by narrow channels. The lake is connected to Flat Horn Lake via Weiss Creek.

**GAME SPECIES PRESENT:** Walleye, northern pike, bluegill, pumpkinseed, black crappie, largemouth bass, and yellow perch.

**WALLEYE:** "It's been a self-sustaining, lower-density lake compared to some other lakes in the Finland area, but still in the expected

range," said Matt Weberg, Finland area fisheries supervisor. "They often can be pretty nice sized." Walleyes were last stocked in 1999. Since then, somewhat sporadic spawning has carried the lake's walleyes. Although there are some missing year-classes, that's made more room for fish to grow and if you catch one of the lake's walleyes, it's often a good one. There are decent numbers of fish here over 20 inches.

**NORTHERN PIKE:** You'll find "above-average numbers of pike. Usually there are some quality-sized fish that will show up," Weberg said. Surveys usually produce at least one pike over 35 inches.

**BLUEGILL:** "In 2000, some adult bluegills were stocked there to enhance the fishery," Weberg noted. Fish from the initial stocking grew quickly, with fish topping 10 inches. But since then, 'gills are still trying to make their way in Gegoka. "It still needs to be evaluated," Weberg said. "They're obviously reproducing to some degree. The habitat's pretty good for panfish to become established. There's no guarantee a bluegill fishery will be established, but it's certainly got potential."

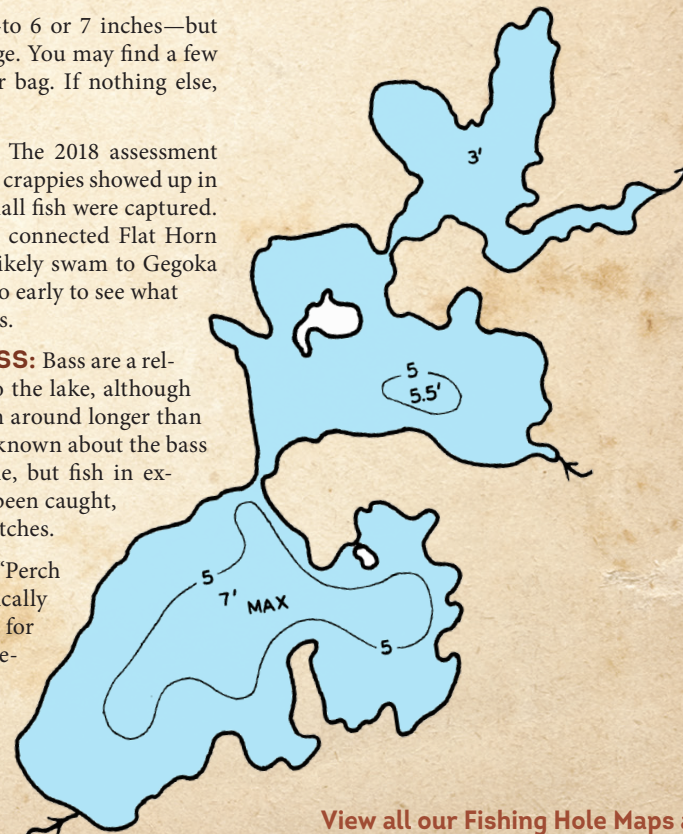
**PUMPKINSEED:** Pumpkinseed sunfish were native to the lake and are found in pretty good numbers. They grow fairly large

as pumpkinseeds go—to 6 or 7 inches—but that's still not very large. You may find a few keepers to add to your bag. If nothing else, they're always pretty!

**BLACK CRAPPIE:** The 2018 assessment was the first time black crappies showed up in the lake. Some very small fish were captured. Crappies have been in connected Flat Horn Lake for a while and likely swam to Gegoka via Weiss Creek. It's too early to see what kind of fishery develops.

**LARGEMOUTH BASS:** Bass are a relatively new addition to the lake, although they seem to have been around longer than crappies. Not much is known about the bass population at this time, but fish in excess of 14 inches have been caught, mostly as accidental catches.

**YELLOW PERCH:** "Perch numbers have typically looked pretty good for that type of lake," Weberg said. They are good forage for pike and walleyes, but some larger fish big enough to suit anglers are available.



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