

FISHING HOLE

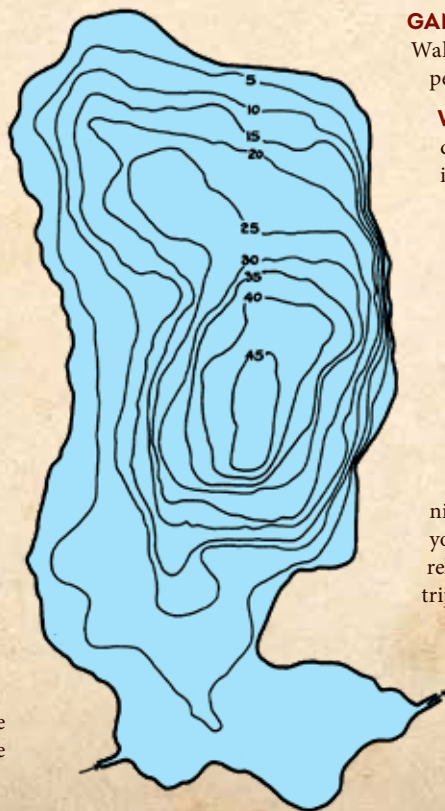
WHITEFISH LAKE

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Whitefish Lake is chock full of walleyes. Plus, as part of the Timber-Frear Loop, this lake delivers a Boundary Waters-like setting without the need for a permit. And if you want, you can even use a motor to fish these lakes.

ACCESS: You'll have to travel a lot of gravel roads to get to Whitefish Lake. From Schroeder, head up Highway 61 for 0.8 miles and turn left onto Temperance River Road. Proceed 5 miles and turn left onto 600 Road. After a mile, turn right onto Richey Lake Road. Travel 5.8 miles and turn left onto The Four-mile Grade. Go 2 miles and turn right onto Forest Service Road 348. Proceed 4.7 miles and pull into the parking lot on your right. You'll have to carry your canoe, kayak, or other small boat a short distance to reach the lake. You won't be able to launch any boat you can't carry.

VITALS: Whitefish Lake spans 345 acres with a maximum depth of 49 feet. It's got excellent water clarity, with 18 feet of visibility. It has a small three-place Forest Service campground at the boat launch and there are three more remote campsites along the shoreline. Plus, it's part of a chain of lakes in the semi-primitive Timber-Frear Loop. It's a 65-rod portage to Elbow Lake or only 20 rods to South Wigwam. Some of the other lakes in the chain (as well as other nearby lakes just outside the chain) have small three- or four-site campgrounds at their boat launches as well, if the one on Whitefish is full, and they also have remote campsites on the water, away from the boat launch. The only restriction on motors is you'll have to carry it down to the lake with you, so by default, most anglers paddle or use small motors. It's a BWCAW-like setting—with motorized options.



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

WALLEYE: Whitefish has a ridiculous amount of walleyes in it. The 2018 DNR survey found an astonishing 25 walleyes per gill net—that's a lot! That's no anomaly. Every DNR survey turns up a lot of walleyes. There's no stocking; the fish are maintained through natural reproduction. Although they grow a bit slower than the area average, there's not a ton of fishing pressure on them, so they do well. There's a nice healthy average size to the fish you'll catch here. You can never rely on a meal of fish on a camping trip, but Whitefish is as close to a guarantee as you can get.

NORTHERN PIKE: Northern pike are heavily overshadowed

by walleyes on this lake. They are found in about average abundance for the area and grow to average size. Most fish you catch will be in the high teens or low 20s. On occasion, fish over 30 inches are caught, but they are the exception.

YELLOW PERCH: Yellow perch size and numbers have fluctuated over the years. The latest survey in 2018 was pretty dismal, with most fish running pretty small, although one whopper topped the 12-inch mark. But wind the clock back to 2010 and a fair amount of keepers showed up in the DNR survey, including fish over 11 inches. Nobody travels to Whitefish specifically to catch perch. But if you fish for walleyes with live bait, expect to catch a few perch. Who knows, you might luck out and catch a few keepers.

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