

FISHING HOLE

BALL CLUB LAKE

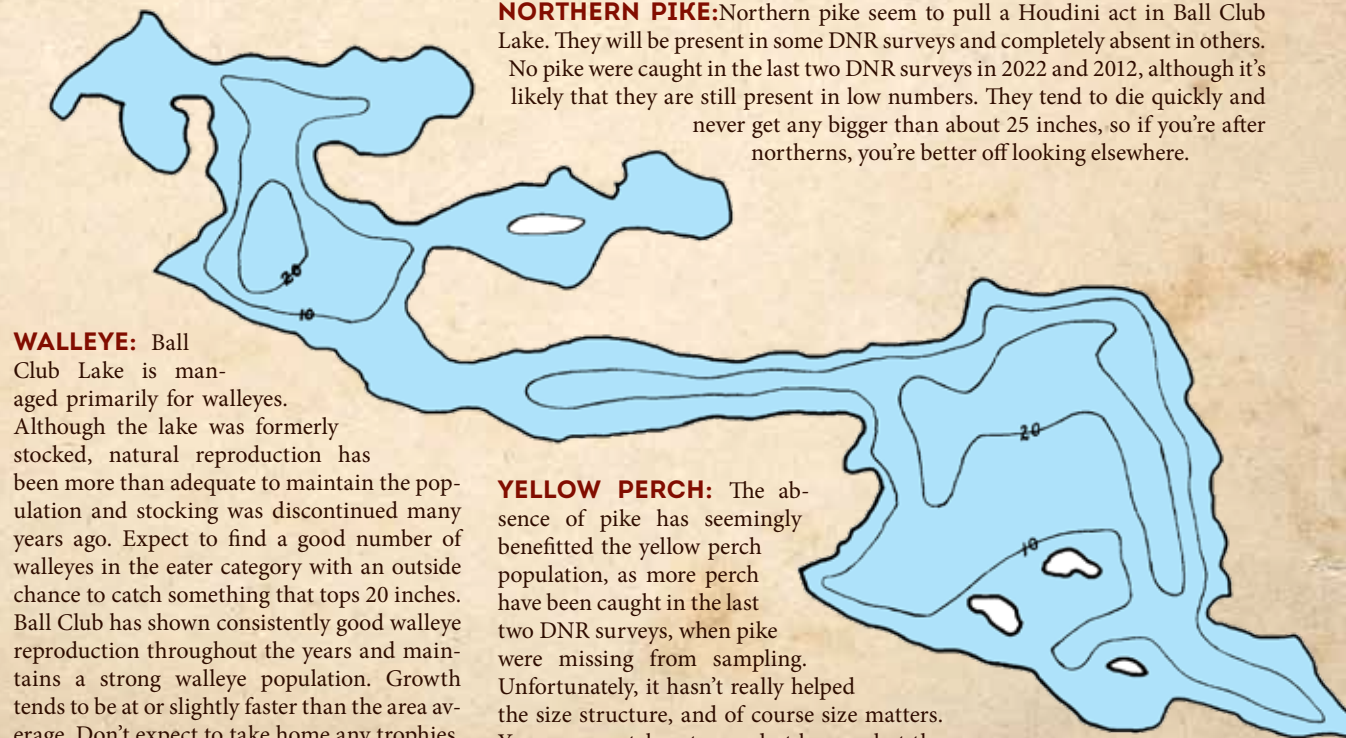
BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Ball Club Lake has good numbers of eater-sized walleyes. You'll find a couple free campsites on this quiet, undeveloped lake as well. The lake has a simple fish community, consisting of walleyes, northern pike and yellow perch.

ACCESS: From Grand Marais, head up Cook County Highway 12 (Gunflint Trail) for 4.6 miles. Turn left onto Cook County Highway 8 (Devil Track Road) and proceed 5.7 miles. Veer right onto Ball Club Lake Road and travel 8.7 miles to where the road dead ends at the lake. There's a concrete ramp with a dock and parking for a half-dozen vehicles at the southwest end of the lake. There's also a campsite you can walk to from the boat access, and another campsite you have to boat to on the north end of the lake. Both sites are free and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

VITALS: Ball Club Lake spans 206 acres with a maximum depth of 25 feet. Average water clarity is 7.8 feet. There's no development on the lake, other than the boat access and the two campsites.

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



WALLEYE: Ball Club Lake is managed primarily for walleyes. Although the lake was formerly stocked, natural reproduction has been more than adequate to maintain the population and stocking was discontinued many years ago. Expect to find a good number of walleyes in the eater category with an outside chance to catch something that tops 20 inches. Ball Club has shown consistently good walleye reproduction throughout the years and maintains a strong walleye population. Growth tends to be at or slightly faster than the area average. Don't expect to take home any trophies, but if you put in your time, you may be rewarded with enough fish for supper.

NORTHERN PIKE: Northern pike seem to pull a Houdini act in Ball Club Lake. They will be present in some DNR surveys and completely absent in others. No pike were caught in the last two DNR surveys in 2022 and 2012, although it's likely that they are still present in low numbers. They tend to die quickly and never get any bigger than about 25 inches, so if you're after northerns, you're better off looking elsewhere.

YELLOW PERCH: The absence of pike has seemingly benefitted the yellow perch population, as more perch have been caught in the last two DNR surveys, when pike were missing from sampling. Unfortunately, it hasn't really helped the size structure, and of course size matters. You may scratch out a modest keeper, but the overwhelming majority of perch you will encounter will be too small to bother with.

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