

FISHING HOLE

MINER'S PIT

BY JOE SHEAD

WHY GO: Located in Ely, Miner's Pit is an abandoned iron ore mine that filled with water. The DNR stocks it heavily with trout, including frequent stockings of large brood stock fish. It offers good fishing from the fishing pier and is a very high-quality trout fishery.

ACCESS: Miner's Pit is located right in Ely. The boat launch and fishing pier are located on North Pioneer Road, near Grand Superior Lodge.

VITALS: Miner's Pit was formerly an iron ore mine, which closed in 1967. Once the mine was shut down, the pit began filling in with water. Today, this deep, crystal-clear lake spans 141 acres with a maximum depth of 140 feet. As a former mine, it's not surprising that it is characterized by very steeply dropping slopes. There are also underwater standing trees on the east end. The shoreline is a mix of public and private ownership. The west end has some new trails that allow shore fishing access. On the east end, there's a new parking lot.

GAME SPECIES

PRESENT: Trout,

sunfish, and bass.

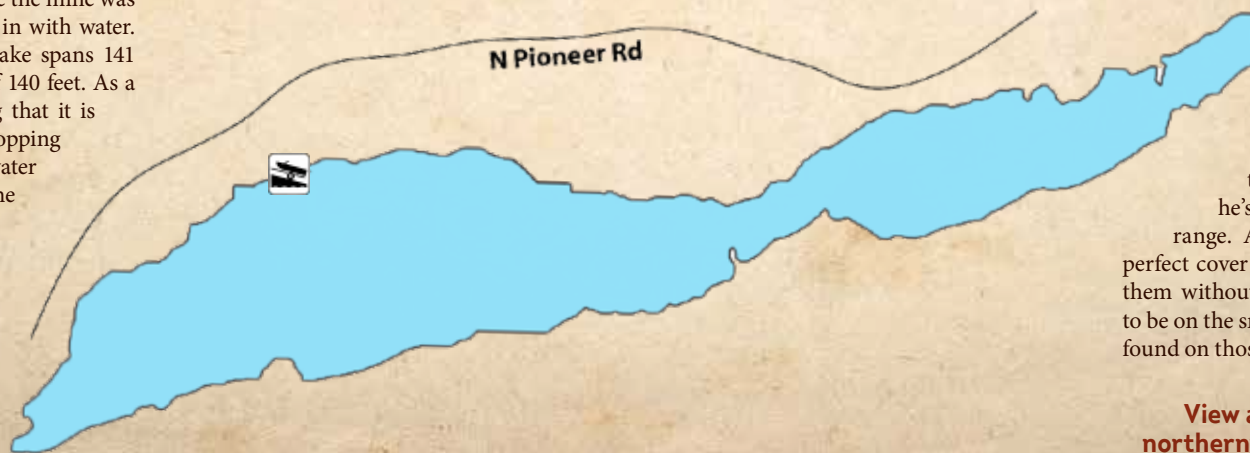
TROUT: "It's a very well-used trout fishery," said Keith Reeves, Tower area fisheries supervisor. "It tends to be a lake that we stock a lot of brood stock in." Brent Flatten, assistant area supervisor, added, "We put almost incomprehensible trout numbers in there." Translation: this is really good trout water. As far as stocking, the only thing that's consistent is the DNR stocks 4,650 yearling rainbow trout in the pit annually. Beyond that, they stock whatever is available: sometimes brookies, sometimes browns. In 2023 they

even stocked lake trout. Because the lake is easy for the DNR to get to and because it's so popular with anglers, the DNR often dumps off their large brood stock fish in the pond after their "career" as spawners for the DNR's stocking program is over. That means anglers could possibly catch a trout weighing 5 or maybe even 8 pounds. Flatten says some of those big brood stock rainbows were added this fall. Reeves said in summer, anglers troll near the surface with downriggers (watch out for those submerged trees on the east end). In winter, he says anglers try fishing

along shore or by the flooded trees. Flatten recommends anglers fish about 10 feet below the ice in winter.

SUNFISH: The lake has decent numbers of sunfish. Although most anglers are here for trout, it's possible to target sunnies as well. Heck, throw a waxworm on a small jig and you could catch anything. The east end trees are an obvious choice for panfish anglers. A slip bobber suspended just above the wood should be effective. Average size in the last survey was 6 inches, with the largest at 8.5, but you may be able to scratch out a few keepers.

BASS: Miner's Pit has both largemouth and smallmouth bass as well. The largemouth tend to get a little bigger. Reeve says he's seen fish in the 15- to 18-inch range. Again, those flooded trees offer perfect cover for bass, as long as you can fish them without getting snagged. Smallies tend to be on the small side. They are more apt to be found on those steep-dropping slopes.



View all our Fishing Hole Maps at:
northernwilds.com/fishingholemaps