

Fishing in Minnesota's Northwest Region . . .

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have been observed from both stocked and non-stocked years, suggesting that stocking and natural reproduction are both contributing to the lakes' walleye populations. Most of the walleyes in the 2018 samples were 14 to 17 inches, with fish up to 24½ inches.

Northern pike are very abundant in the Bottle Lakes. Most are 17 to 25 inches, with fish up to 39 inches sampled. Largemouth Bass are not real abundant, but can range up to 19 inches. Smallmouth Bass were lower in abundance, and reached 16 ½ inches in the 2018 sample. Crappies are not very abundant, but can be good sized.

Eleventh Crow Wing Lake (751 acres) is located in Akeley, in eastern Hubbard County. It has a maximum depth of 80 feet. There are two basins, separated by State Highway 64. A city owned public access is located on the south shore of the western basin of the lake. There is a culvert under Highway 64 between the two basins that is passable by smaller fishing boats to get from one basin to the other.

Eleventh Crow Wing has very good water clarity, so it can be difficult to fish, but it has an excellent walleye population. Walleye abundance has been pretty consistent since the early 1990s, well above other similar lakes and above the management goal during the last survey in 2016. There were a lot of 14 to 19 inch walleye in the 2016 survey, and fish up to 28 inches were sampled.

Northern pike abundance can provide another option if walleye are not cooperative. Pike abundance has been about normal compared to other similar lakes. Most Northern Pike sampled in 2016 were in the 18 to 26 inch size range, but individuals up to 40 inches have been sampled in the past. Eleventh Crow Wing also supports a good population of largemouth bass, with sizes well distributed up to 19 inches.

WALKER

General Outlook for Walker Area: Ice out might not occur until early May this year, which would be later than the historical average of April 26. Walleye spawning should be winding down by the May 11 fishing opener but fish, es-

pecially males, could still be congregated and make for a very good shallow water bite on Opening Day.

Northern Pike are abundant in most area lakes with smaller fish easy to find. Several lakes do have a protected slot limit of 24 to 36 inches, possession limit of three fish, for Northern Pike. In some cases, surveys have found an increase in the proportion of Northern Pike 30+ inches long since the regulations were implemented in 2003. With exception to lakes with a 24 to 36 inch protected slot limit, all others in the area will fall under the regulation implemented in 2018 for pike in the North Central Zone, which is a 10 fish limit with only two longer than 26.0 inches; all pike 22-26" must be released. Panfish and bass action should be good in shallow water areas by Memorial Day.

A number of lakes in the Walker area have experimental or special regulations for certain species. These special rules are designed to maintain or improve fishery quality. A notice of these regulations are typically posted at each lake's public access. Anglers should consult their 2019 Minnesota Fishing Regulations booklet for the most current information.

Woman (5,496 acres), Child (285 acres), and Girl (428 acres) lakes are located southeast of Longville in Cass County and connected by the Boy River, which is navigable by most boats between the three lakes. The main public accesses are on the south side of Child, the north side of Woman, and on the north side of Girl, all on County Road 5. Woman Lake has the majority of the Walleye habitat and supports an excellent population, with sizes sampled in the 2018 survey ranging from 7-25 inches long. There are very strong 2013 and 2016 year classes in the lake, with the 2013 year-class being harvestable sizes and the 2016 year class should be approaching harvestable sizes by fall. Similar to other Walleye lakes in the area, anglers tend to do best until mid-June and again during September and October.

Woman Lake also has a population of quality-sized Yellow Perch and these are often targeted by anglers during fall and winter. Northern Pike

numbers are similar to other lakes of this type. The proportion of Northern Pike longer than 28 inches increased since a protected slot limit of 24 to 36 inches was put in place in 2003. Smallmouth Bass are also abundant in Woman Lake and size quality is exceptional; fish exceeding 20 inches are frequently caught by anglers. Child and Girl lakes have better habitat for Largemouth Bass, Black Crappie, and Bluegill, and are better options for catching preferred sizes of these species. Pike numbers also tend to be higher in Child and Girl lakes. All three lakes support a low-density Muskellunge population with excellent sizes.

Little Boy (1,452 acres) and Wabedo (1,226 acres) lakes are located south of Longville in Cass County and are connected via a navigable channel. Public accesses are located on the southwest shores of both lakes on County Road 54 (Little Boy) and County Road 120 (Wabedo).

Little Boy Lake has a strong Walleye population, with sizes sampled in the 2018 survey ranging from 11 to 25 inches long. The 2016 year-class appears strong and should be of harvestable size in 2019. An experimental Walleye regulation was implemented in 2018. A protected slot limit 18-26 inches, possession limit 4, with 1 over 26 inches allowed in possession aims to increase the natural reproduction capacity of the lake as well as increase population size structure.

Smallmouth Bass were common with fish up to 21 inches sampled. Northern Pike were abundant and the proportion of Northern Pike longer than 28 inches has increased since a protected slot limit of 24 to 36 inches was put in place in 2003. Wabedo Lake provides multi-species opportunities.

Although Walleye are not as prevalent, fish up to 28 inches were sampled. Northern Pike are abundant with sizes sampled in the 2018 survey ranging from 14 to 38 inches long. Black Crappie are present and fish exceeding 13 inches were sampled. Both Little Boy and Wabedo Lakes have the potential to produce large Muskellunge with fish up to 50 inches sampled in the 2015 survey. Special regulations for Northern Pike and Wal-

ley are the same for both Little Boy and Wabedo Lakes.

Ten Mile Lake (5,080 acres) is located northwest of Hackensack in Cass County. The public access is located on the southwest shore off of County Road 6.

Ten Mile Lake has an abundant Walleye population with sizes sampled in the 2018 survey ranging from 7 to 27 inches long. The 2015 and 2013 year classes appear strong and comprised the majority of the catch. Largemouth and Smallmouth bass also provide additional quality fishing opportunities to anglers, with fish measuring 19 inches long for both species. Northern Pike are abundant with sizes ranging from 10 to 31 inches long. A Northern Pike protected slot limit from 24-36 inches, possession limit 3, with 1 over 36 inches allowed in possession exists on Ten Mile Lake. Lake Whitefish are also present and provide a unique angling opportunity. Fish ranged from 15 to 20 inches long in the 2018 survey.

NW REGION LARGE LAKE OUTLOOK

Lake of the Woods: Walleye and Sauger are the most important sport fish on Lake of the Woods, and as such those populations are monitored annually. This assessment has been conducted every September since 1981, so there is a lot of good population trend data available for these species.

There were strong Walleye year classes produced in 2011 and 2013. These Walleye

range from 14 to 18 inches long, and should be very abundant on the opener. In addition to these keeper-size walleye, anglers should also notice good numbers of small walleye, in the 6 to 8-inch range. These walleye showed up in good numbers in our annual fall survey, as well as during the creel survey conducted last winter.

Lake of the Woods is well known for the trophy-size

Walleye that anglers catch every year, and Walleye up to 32 inches are sampled every year during DNR fish sampling. Consider that these fish are quite old, and that it takes a long time for them to get to be of trophy size. Carefully consider what you will do with one of these fish before you harvest it, as it may have

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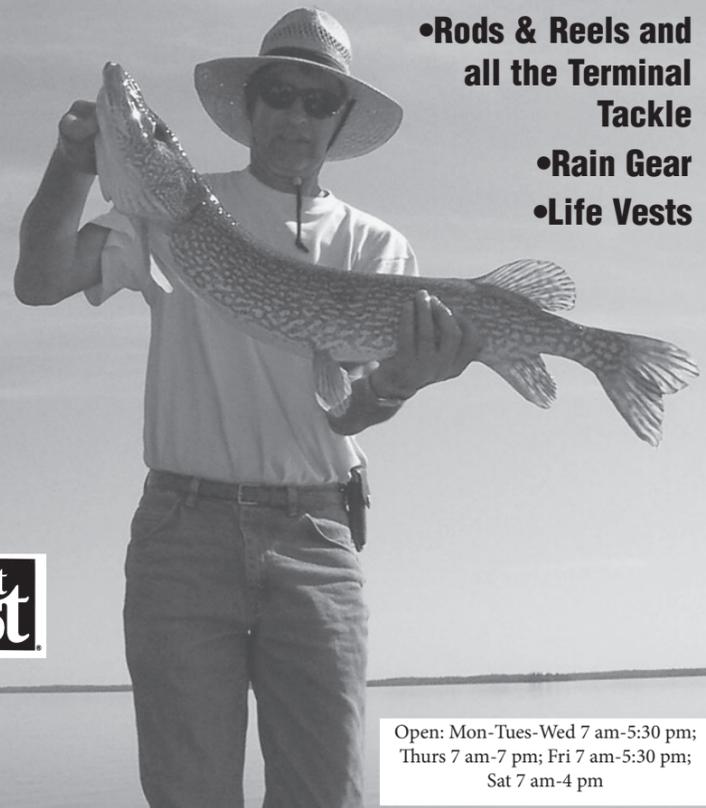
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