

FISHER LAKE

LOCATION

In the northeastern portion of the region, north of the town of Mercer and east of Highway H on the Turtle River system.

ACCESS

An improved facility is available on the southwest shore. From Highway H take Fisher Lake Road for approximately 2.7 miles to Fisher Lake Road East. Turn right and drive 0.5 mile to the boat landing entrance on the left (boat landing sign). A steep concrete ramp, blacktop approach and adequate turn-around are provided. Four-wheel drive vehicles can be a plus with larger boats. Limited parking is available for approximately 4 or 5 rigs. Additionally, there is a launch off of Fisher Lake Road at the well-marked Shay Dam Public Boat Landing. A blacktop approach, concrete plank ramp, adequate parking, picnic tables, and park amenities, etc. are available. This launch allows anglers to motor carefully upstream into Fisher Lake, as the dam is located just downstream.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Fisher Lake is the downstream lake of the three-lake chain – Cedar, Catherine and Fisher – on the Turtle River drainage. Shay Dam is approximately one mile downstream on the Turtle River, which is navigable to this structure. Additionally, the DNR has placed a 40-inch size limit on muskie and there is no minimum length limit on walleye but only one fish over 14 inches is allowed.

LAKE TYPE

Size & Depth – 452 acres, 25 feet.

Lake Type – Drainage lake. The inlet from Catherine Lake enters on the south side and the outlets on the west shore to the Turtle River. The river is navigable downstream to Shay Dam. Additionally, Pardee Creek and a small unnamed creek from Beaver Lake are present.

Water Chemistry – Slightly fertile with a brown color of low transparency. Levels tend to fluctuate approximately 2 feet annually due to the water control structure (Shay Dam). A summer thermocline is an annual event, usually forming between 14 and 19 feet. Summer oxygen levels tend to be inadequate below 19 feet.

Bottom Components – 52% sand, 35% muck, 8% gravel, 5% rubble.

Cover – Both emergent and submergent species are abundant, including spikerush, cattail, pondweed, pickerelweed and coontail. Also, lily pads are available. Drowned wood is available on some of the shoreline and cribs have been installed in recent years.

Shoreline – Mostly upland and in private ownership.

FISHERY

Fisher Lake is an excellent resource with size, depth, structure and great cover. The state rates walleye, largemouth bass, northern pike, muskie and panfish as “common.” Smallmouth bass receive a “present” ranking. Walleye display some natural reproduction, but must be augmented by state stocking. Muskie exhibit natural reproduction, although stocking continued until recently on an alternate year basis. However, they can achieve a trophy size with 50-inches documented in recent years. Largemouth commonly achieve good size, including individuals in the 4-pound bracket...and larger. Panfish are abundant, especially bluegill and crappie. Expect all panfish to exhibit slow growth rates and small average size, but crappie can be the exception as individuals in the 12-inch range (and larger) are seen every year.

Management – A recent electrofishing survey confirmed that several walleye year classes are present, due largely to stocking. Northern pike are very common and rarely exceed 24 inches in size. Largemouth bass are probably more abundant than smallmouth.

Stocking – In recent years, walleye are being stocked on an alternate year basis, typically 12,000- to 16,000-fingerlings. Muskie have been introduced periodically, usually averaging about 900 fish, but currently stocking has been curtailed.

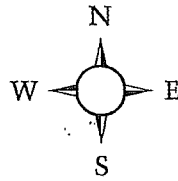
Forage – Common shiner, golden shiner, log perch, black bullhead, white sucker, redhorse and crayfish are available, creating a diverse prey base.

FISHING AREAS & PRESENTATIONS

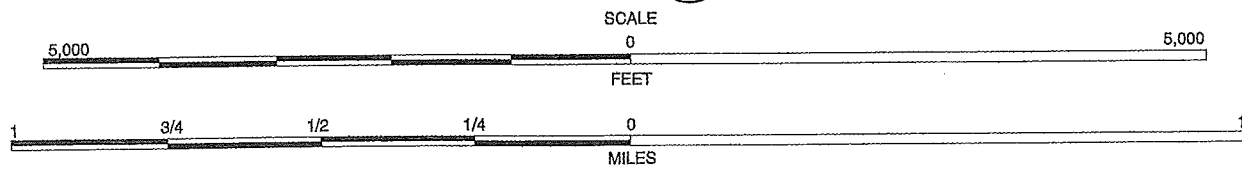
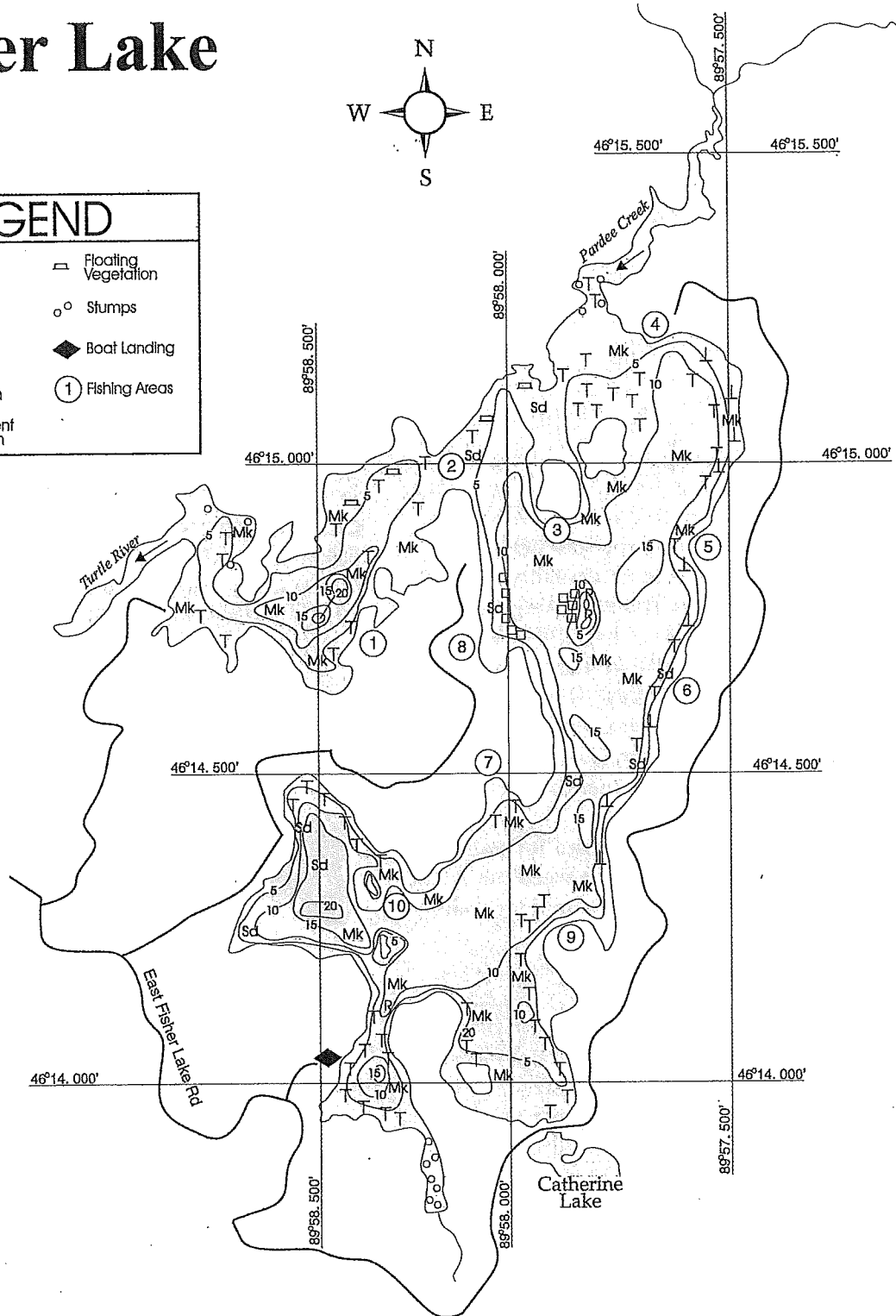
Note: The brown stain of the Turtle River system always suggests bright colors – from jigs to muskie lures. For example, orange, yellow and chartreuse are recommended in jig selection.

Area (1) This basin region deserves attention. Two

Fisher Lake



LEGEND	
Sd Sand	▭ Floating Vegetation
Mk Muck	○ Stumps
R Rock	◆ Boat Landing
□ Crib	① Fishing Areas
⊥ Emergent Vegetation	
T Submergent Vegetation	



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separate 20-foot holes are important in summer and fall for walleye. In late fall, work these holes for walleye with a jig or plain hook/minnow combination. The inshore weedlines offer largemouth, northern pike, muskie and panfish. Expect a few largemouth to be in these weeds throughout the spring and summer.

Area (2) Drowned wood and weedlines attract all species – especially muskie, largemouth and panfish. Try spinnerbaits and shallow-running crankbaits for spring and summer bass. “Twitching” a Rapala or Rogue is suggested.

Area (3) Work the island breaklines for spring and summer walleye and muskie.

Area (4) The inletting mouth of Pardee Creek provides abundant submergent weeds along with some drowned wood. Look for spring walleye, largemouth bass and the occasional muskie. Work the deepest weedline edge during the summer and autumn for muskie. This is in all actuality a miniature flowage environment. Try “twitching” floating minnow baits on top of the cabbage for bass and muskie. A No. 7 is a good size for largemouth while something in the size of a Bagleys Top Gun, No. 11 Rapala, or small Jake is suggested for early season muskie. A floating plastic worm is an alternative presentation for spring and summer bass, relating to the slop and wood of this region.

Area (5) Check this protruding point for walleye and muskie. Again, be aware of the weedline. Light weedless jigs (1/16-ounce) are suggested for walleye.

Area (6) A well-defined submergent weedline is the key to walleye and May/June crappie. Don't be surprised at a northern pike or largemouth bass. Be sure to work the deepest weedline parallel rather than merely making perpendicular casts.

Area (7) The island and rock bar structure are enhanced by the presence of older cribs. Walleye are a top quarry here, especially from opening day through June. Additionally, early morning and evening hours will continue to yield fish during the summer months. Depthfinder usage is critical for “reading” structure as well as cribs. Jig and live bait offerings are suggested; also slip bobber combinations. In late May and June look for the occasional smallmouth bass when keying on the rocks.

Additionally, it is significant for autumn muskie region with crankbaits, jerkbaits and suckers on

quick-strike rigs good choices.

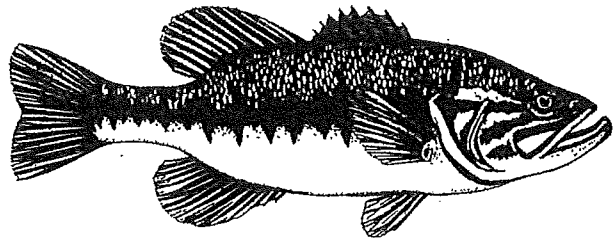
Area (8) A line of cribs enhances this shoreline region. Look for panfish, bass and walleye in the spring and early summer. Additionally, muskie are possible throughout much of the summer and fall. Depthfinder skills help to isolate the crib cover.

Area (9) The weed point is a popular region for muskie, walleye, and spring crappie (especially during the spawn). However, this easily recognized cover means that everybody fishes it.

Area (10) This north shore location of this bay offers cover and structure. Weeds include pondweed (cabbage) and coontail and drowned wood is present. The island shoreline breaks are an additional plus. Walleye, muskie, northern pike and the occasional largemouth bass are available. Spring crappie often spawn on the shoreline weeds.

CONCLUSION

Fisher Lake offers a substantial resource and one that is worth learning. Walleye, muskie, largemouth and crappie provide excellent potential, including the occasional trophy. This is dark water, so think bright in presentations.



CATHERINE LAKE

LOCATION

In the east central portion of the Mercer area, south of Fisher Lake and Fisher Lake Road East, north of Cedar Lake.

ACCESS

Navigable access is available from both Fisher and Cedar lakes, the north and south ends, respectively.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Catherine is the middle of a three-lake chain on the Turtle River, and in all actuality is a mere widening in the river. As part of the chain, it has a 40-inch size limit on muskie and no minimum length limit on walleye, but only one over 14 inches is allowed.

LAKE FEATURES

Size & Depth – 118 acres, 11 feet.

Lake Type – Drainage lake. The Turtle River inlets on the southeast end and outlets to Fisher Lake through a large culvert on the north end.

Water Chemistry – Slightly fertile with a brown stain of low transparency.

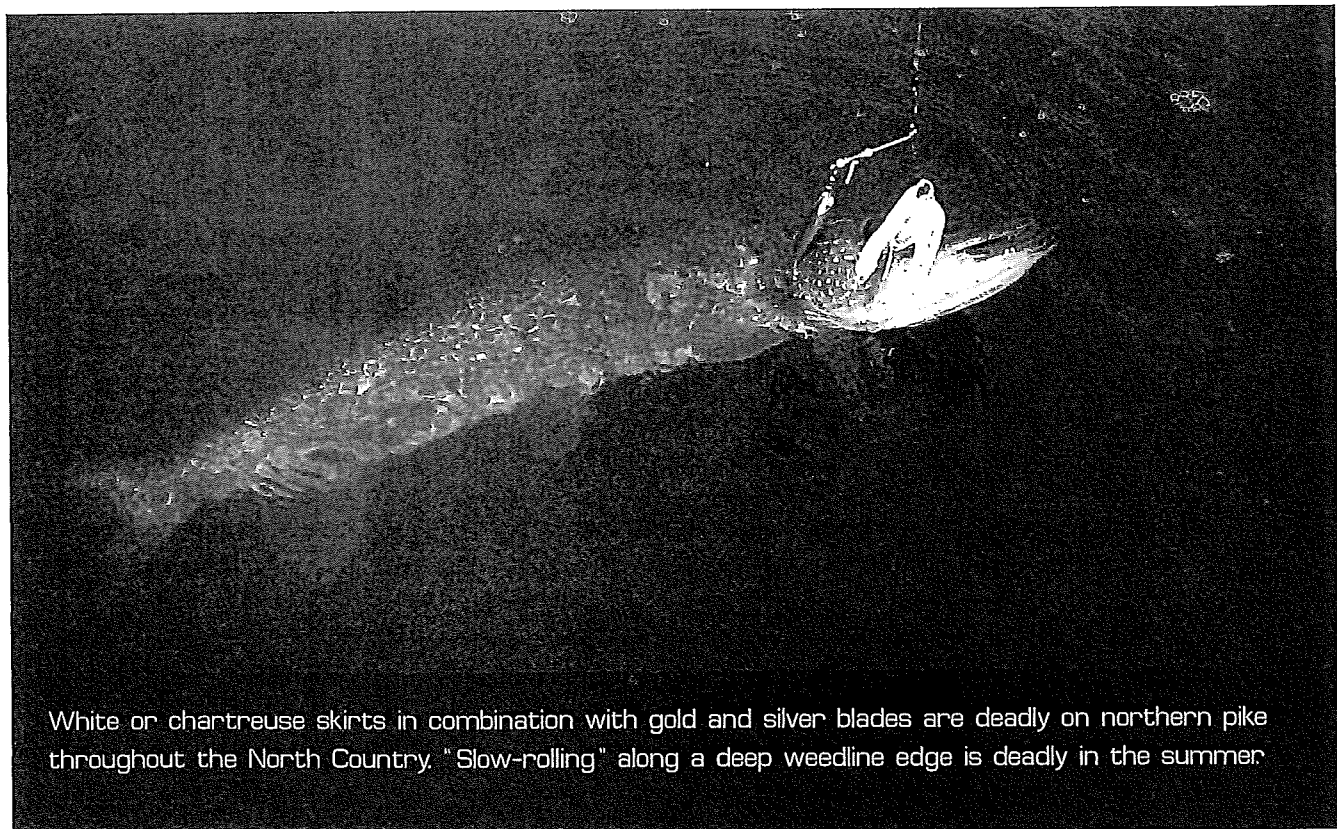
Bottom Components – 55% sand, 25% muck, 15% gravel, 5% rubble and boulder.

Cover – Submergent and floating varieties are abundant and dominate the entire lake basin. Pondweed (large leaf and narrow leaf cabbage) and coontail are common, along with lily pad.

Shoreline – Primarily upland although areas of wetland are present on the south end. There are almost two miles of state ownership, largely on the east and south shores.

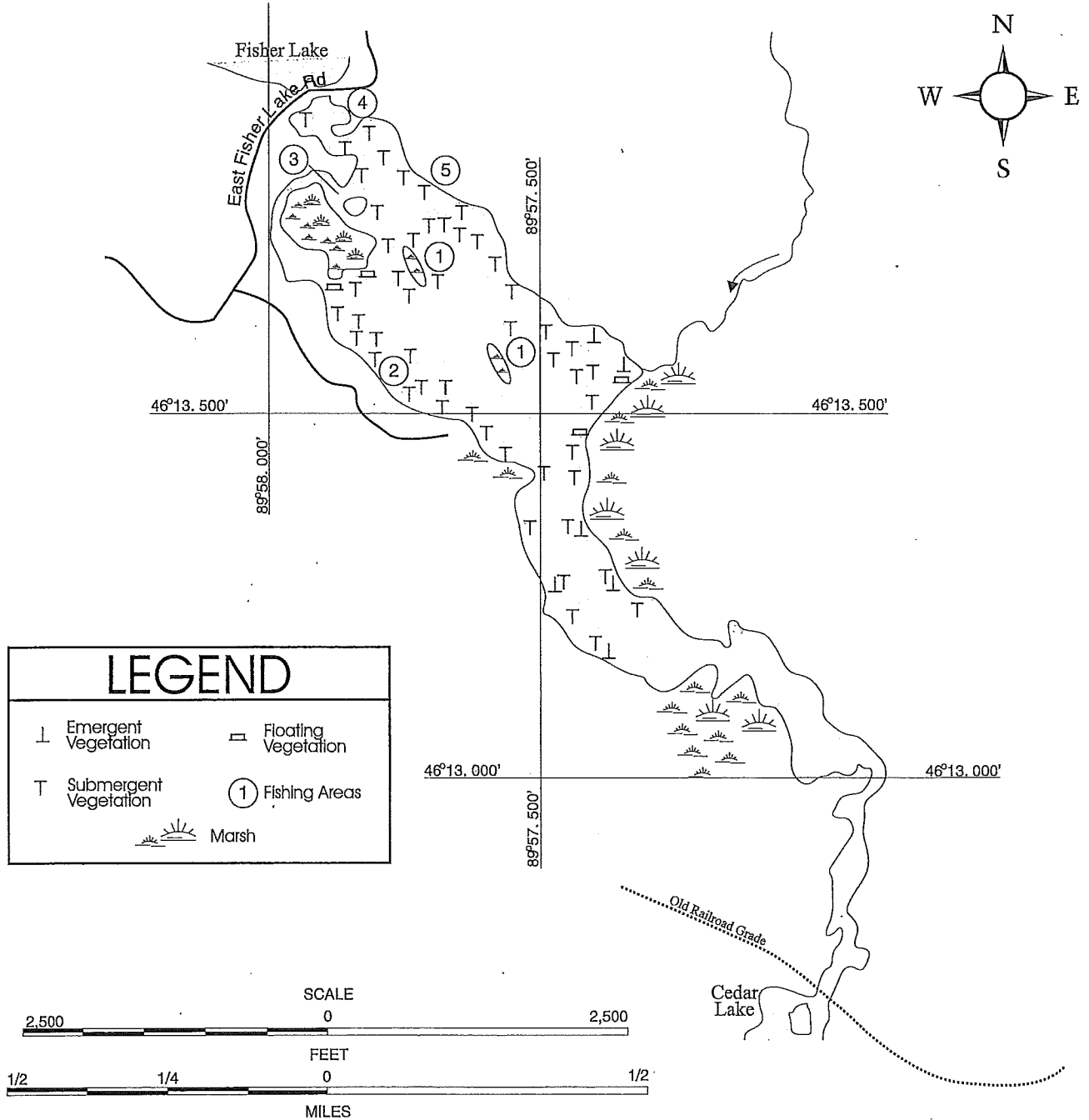
FISHERY

Catherine for its size has a remarkably diverse fishery. The state rates walleye, northern pike, muskie, largemouth bass and panfish as “common” and smallmouth “present.” However, in general smallmouth are very limited, especially in comparison to largemouth. Smallmouth habitat is virtually nonexistent, although adjacent Fisher Lake and Cedar Lake have viable populations. Northern pike are small, rarely exceeding 24 inches. Muskie of decent size are possible, including individuals into the 40-inch bracket. Largemouth can achieve a large size, including occasional fish that exceed 4 pounds. Bluegill, crappie and pumpkinseed are the domi-



White or chartreuse skirts in combination with gold and silver blades are deadly on northern pike throughout the North Country. “Slow-rolling” along a deep weedline edge is deadly in the summer

Catherine Lake



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nant panfish species. Crappie growth rates are good enough to provide adult fish, up to 12 inches. Obviously, the fish community is influenced by stocking that occurs upstream (Cedar) or downstream at Fisher Lake.

Management – An older fyke netting and electrofishing survey revealed that bluegill, crappie and pumpkinseed are the primary panfish species. Yellow perch and rock bass are present, but in more limited numbers. Expect most panfish to be small in size, although crappie have the potential to achieve a good size, perhaps 11 to 12 inches. Walleye, northern pike, largemouth bass and muskie were captured in reasonable numbers, although pike were most numerous.

FISHING AREAS & PRESENTATIONS

Note: Catherine is a weed expert's version of heaven on earth. Weed skills are necessary for virtually every angling effort. Weedless jigs in the Lindy, Northland and Jack's styles are important as knowing when to try floating balsa minnows or floating plastic worms for largemouth. Panfishing is accomplished in the weeds – either in openings, channels or on the deep edges. Tubes and slip bobbers are suggested. Muskie enthusiasts must choose presentations that effectively work weeds – shallow-running bucktails, topwaters or floating minnowbaits.

Area (1) The center weed bars deserves attention for muskie, northern pike and walleye. Remember that both islands are surrounded by areas of submergent weeds that should not be overlooked. Work this outside fringe area before working close to the emergent weed islands. Select bright colors for presentations – orange jigs for walleye, and “hot” colors for bucktail blades – orange, chartrreuse, etc.

Area (2) The west shoreline is important. In early spring work the primary weed edge, although by early summer the entire shoreline area will be developed in submergent weeds. Polaroid glasses are important for “seeing” holes in the cabbage as well as transitions – coontail merging to cabbage, for example. Largemouth bass, muskie and walleye are good possibilities.

Area (3) Cast the bog edge for largemouth bass and panfish, especially crappie in May. Tubes beneath slip bobber are a top choice. Pearl and white combinations are recommended colors for

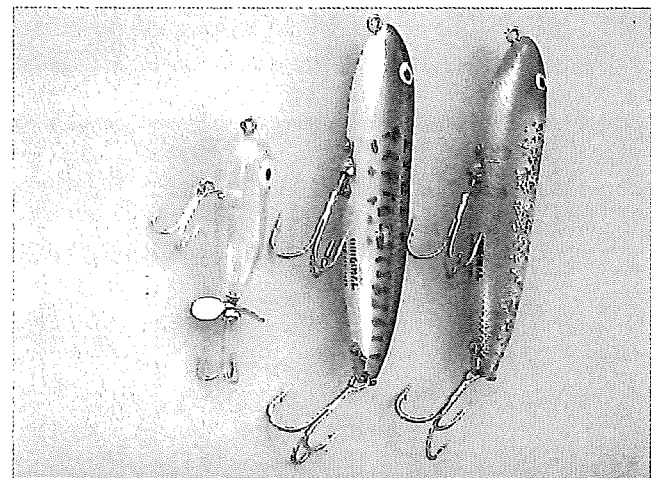
spawning fish. Try casting a floating plastic worm into the bog edges for bass.

Area (4) The narrows at the Fisher Lake entrance culvert is superb for spring bass and panfish, especially crappie. Weedlines are the key. Plastic worms, tubes and jigs n’ pigs are suggested for largemouth.

Area (5) The high bank of the east side is somewhat deceptive because cabbage extends out from the shoreline. Work the deep edge of the weedline for summer muskie and pike. Look to the shallow “slop” for largemouth. Weedless spoons, floating plastic worms and topwaters are productive.

CONCLUSION

Catherine is worth fishing and secondly, often serves as respite from those days with high winds. Weed fishing expertise is necessary for all species – from bass to muskie. May and June can offer above average panfish action, although this tends to cycle from year to year. Despite the dark stain, low light fishing is a plus for walleye and muskie.



“Walk the dog” topwaters are effective on summer gamefish – muskie, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, even northern pike. Additionally, they have a unique reputation for attracting trophy smallmouth bass on clear lakes. Zara Spooks were the very first lure in this time-honored lineage of baits. All others copied the example set by the classic Heddon Bait Company, including today’s muskie lures that “walk the dog.”

CEDAR LAKE

LOCATION

In the eastern portion of the Mercer area, north of Highway J, and west of South Turtle Lake.

ACCESS

An improved boat ramp is available on the lake's southwest side. Take Cedar Lake Circle Road from Highway J to the marked access. Cedar Lake Circle loops around and accesses Highway J twice – one offering an approach from the east, the second from the west. If accessing from the east the drive is approximately 2.0 miles to the marked facility on the right. A concrete plank ramp, limited turn-around, blacktop approach and parking for approximately 8 rigs are available.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Cedar is the headwaters lake of a three-lake navigable chain (Cedar, Catherine, Fisher) and is a popular boating/canoe waterway. Camping is allowed on one state-owned island. Additionally, the lake has a 40-inch size limit on muskie and there is no minimum length limit on walleye, but only one over 14 inches is allowed. Additionally, pleasant northwoods aesthetics are provided.

LAKE FEATURES

Size & Depth – 191 acres, 20 feet.

Lake Type – Drainage lake. The Turtle River inlets (from South Turtle Lake) on the east shore and outlets on the north side. While the outlet is navigable for boats, the inlet stream is strictly a canoe situation.

Water Chemistry – Moderately fertile with a brown stain of reduced transparency, approximately 3 to 4 feet.

Bottom Components – Sand (30%), rubble (30%), gravel (25%), boulders 15%, muck (5%).

Cover – Submergent vegetation is present, although not especially abundant. Pondweed varieties and coontail are available, as are limited regions of bulrush. However, drowned wood and laydowns are important on much of the shoreline.

Shoreline – Generally upland, except for a small portion at the inlet. Approximately one mile is in public ownership.

FISHERY

Currently, the DNR lists walleye, muskie, northern

pike and panfish as “common.” Both bass species are listed as “present.” However, in recent years smallmouth bass appear to be more prevalent than largemouth bass. Walleye reproduction varies dramatically, including successive years of no or marginal reproduction. Muskie populations have expanded under a state program of stocking that began in the late 1980's. Northern pike have declined since the state began muskie stocking, and probably don't rate a “common” ranking. The panfish resource is quite diversified with crappie and bluegill the most numerous species. Perch and rock bass are present.

Management – Recent electrofishing surveys have confirmed the presence of established walleye year classes, largely the result of stocking.

Stocking – In recent years, walleye and muskie are stocked on an alternate year basis – approximately 9,500-and 300-fingerling, respectively. However, muskie introductions were recently curtailed, as managers believe natural reproduction will sustain the resource.

Forage – Sucker and redhorse are abundant because of the presence of the inletting and outletting rivers, and are significant prey items for muskie. Additionally, rusty crayfish are present.

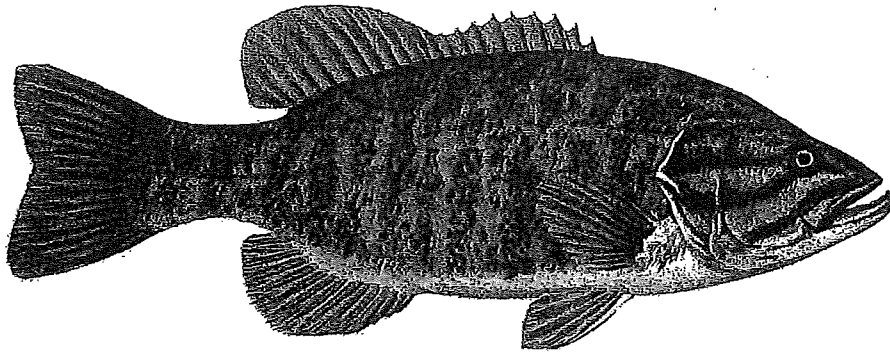
MARKED FISHING AREAS & PRESENTATIONS

Note: The brown stain suggests bright lures, including orange or chartreuse jig colors. The walleye fishery typically relates to weedlines and drowned wood during spring and summer. These fish move to the deeper basin by late fall. The same axiom on color applies to muskie baits – bright is recommended, although sucker, walleye and redhorse patterns work well.

Area (1) Work this small, shallow weed point for evening muskie and the occasional walleye. Both cabbage and coontail are present. Casting light jigs (1/16-ounce) tipped with a fathead in spring, leech or nightcrawler half in summer is suggested.

Area (2) Drowned wood and laydowns mark this shoreline. Walleye, muskie and panfish are spring possibilities. Always work this region for muskie in October and November, casting parallel with the shoreline. Shallow-running presentations are suggested because of the wood. Weedless or brush jigs are a plus for walleye enthusiasts.

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Called "the gamest fish that swims" in freshwater, smallmouth bass numbers are surging throughout Wisconsin's North Country - the result of excellent DNR management and angler catch-and-release ethics.

Area (3) This back bay should be fished for spring panfish (including crappie), largemouth bass and walleye. Weedlines include lily pad and submergent varieties. Casting a small jig tipped with a minnow is a good multi-species presentation.

Area (4) The rockbar will hold the occasional muskie (emphasis on 'occasional'), especially in the evening hours. Try a topwater throughout the region. Careful boat navigation is a must as this is shallow and rocky.

Area (5) The shoreline point and adjacent submerged flat should be carefully worked for muskie and the occasional smallmouth bass. Try "twitching" minnow baits in the Crane, Slammer, and Jake style.

Area (6) The northern point of the island offers drowned wood, laydowns, brushpiles and boulders. Walleye, smallmouth bass and the occasional muskie are possible.

Area (7) The southern end of the island has a good drop-off to 10 to 12 feet. Additionally, the island point leads to a submerged rockbar that is not shown on the state maps. Walleye and autumn muskie are often found relating to the bar. Jigs and live bait combinations are suggested for the walleye: crankbaits or a sucker on a quick-strike rig for muskie.

Area (8) This southern shoreline is dominated by fallen wood, although a few coontail clumps are present. Check the coontail for summer walleye on a dark day by casting 1/16-ounce jigs tipped with a crawler. Muskie are an important quarry on this

shore. Be sure to work parallel with the drop-offs after perpendicular casting is completed to the shoreline.

Area (9) More drowned wood on this shoreline offers muskie, walleye and the occasional smallmouth bass. Jigs and live bait or plastics (Twisters, grubs and 4-inch worms) are suggested for walleye and bass.

Area (10) The weedline edges in front of the Turtle River inlet are a well-known multi-species region. Panfish (crappie), walleye, northern pike, muskie and the occasional largemouth bass are available. Muskie are taken from the weed edges on the lake side, although don't overlook the entire vicinity. Crappie are in the weed pockets as are largemouth bass. Weed presentations are suggested for all species, including tubes for crappie, floating plastic worms for bass, and weedless spoons for pike.

Area (11) The south and east shorelines of the state island deserve a quick check for summer and fall muskie.

Area (12) Spring walleye often relate to this gravel bar. Cast a 1/16-ounce jig and minnow and retrieve slowly, keeping the jig in contact with the bottom.

CONCLUSION

Cedar's fishing rests with walleye, muskie and occasionally crappie (depending on the year as this species is always cyclic in numbers) and smallmouth bass. While better smallmouth fisheries are available in the region, Cedar remains a substantial fishery and provides superb wilderness vistas.

Cedar Lake

LEGEND	
* Hazard	T Submergent Vegetation
Sd Sand	□ Floating Vegetation
Mk Muck	◆ Boat Landing
R Rock	① Fishing Areas
Gr Gravel	☀ Marsh
⊥ Emergent Vegetation	○ Deadfall

