

Lake information report

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Name: Saganaga

Nearest Town: Grand Marais
 Primary County: Cook
 Survey Date: 08/08/2011
 Inventory Number: 16063300



Purchase a walleye stamp. Your voluntary contribution will be used to support walleye stocking.

Public Access Information

Ownership	Type	Description
US Forest Service	Channel	On the south side of Gull Lake, with parking for 30 vehicles. Access to Saganaga Lake via a navigable channel. No fee at this access, but channel can be tricky. BWCAW permits required for Saganaga Lake.
County	Concrete	On west side of Saganaga Narrows, with parking for 30 vehicles. Launch fee collected by Cook County, BWCAW permits also required.
US Forest Service	Concrete	At south end of Saganaga narrows, with parking for 20 vehicles. Launch fee collected by Cook County, BWCAW permits also required.

Fishing Regulations:

Special and/or Experimental Fishing Regulations exist on this lake. Please refer to our online [Minnesota Fishing Regulations](#).

Lake Characteristics

Lake Area (acres): null	Dominant Bottom Substrate: N/A
Littoral Area (acres): null	Abundance of Aquatic Plants: N/A
Maximum Depth (ft): 280	Maximum Depth of Plant Growth (ft): N/A
Water Clarity (ft): 13.4 (9.5-21)	

Did you know? Much of Minnesota's fisheries program is reimbursed by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program (federal excise tax), administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Fish Sampled for the 2011 Survey Year

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Species	Gear Used	Number of fish per net		Average Fish Weight (lbs)	Normal Range (lbs)
		Caught	Normal Range		
<i>Burbot</i>	Gill net	0.23	0.3 - 1.3	1.31	0.7 - 1.9
<i>Cisco Species</i>	Gill net	5.91	N/A	0.24	N/A
<i>Lake Trout</i>	Gill net	0.47	0.8 - 4.3	2.45	1.2 - 3.1
<i>Lake Whitefish</i>	Gill net	2.16	1.1 - 9.3	2.47	1.3 - 2.3
<i>Northern Pike</i>	Gill net	1.21	0.3 - 1.0	2.84	2.7 - 5.3
<i>Pumpkinseed</i>	Gill net	0.07	N/A	0.18	N/A
<i>Smallmouth Bass</i>	Gill net	0.23	0.3 - 2.2	1.66	0.7 - 1.4
<i>Walleye</i>	Gill net	1.53	0.6 - 9.7	1.16	1.1 - 3.3
<i>White Sucker</i>	Gill net	0.63	1.7 - 5.0	2.60	1.6 - 2.4
<i>Yellow Perch</i>	Gill net	0.51	0.3 - 2.8	0.08	0.1 - 0.2

Normal Ranges represent typical catches for lakes with similar physical and chemical characteristics.

Length of Selected Species (Trapnet, Gillnet) Sampled for the 2011 Survey Year

Species	Number of fish caught in each category (inches)								
	0-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+	Total
<i>burbot</i>	0	0	0	2	6	2	0	0	10
<i>cisco species</i>	0	31	168	45	10	0	0	0	254
<i>lake trout</i>	0	0	0	2	10	6	2	0	20
<i>lake whitefish</i>	0	6	7	7	31	42	0	0	93
<i>northern pike</i>	0	0	0	1	20	19	9	3	52
<i>pumpkinseed</i>	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
<i>smallmouth bass</i>	0	2	1	2	5	0	0	0	10
<i>walleye</i>	0	7	6	22	29	2	0	0	66
<i>white sucker</i>	0	0	3	5	17	2	0	0	27
<i>yellow perch</i>	13	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	22

For the record, the largest Chinook Salmon (King) taken in Minnesota weighed 33 lbs., 4 oz. and was caught:

Where: Poplar River, Cook County
 When: 9/23/89
 Statistics: 44.75" length, 25.75" girth

and by

Where: 10/12/89
 When:
 Statistics: Lake Superior, St. Louis County

Fish Stocking Activity

Fish **Stocked** by Species for the Last Ten Years

Year	Species	Size	Number	Pounds
2010	Walleye	fry	5,200,000	52.0
2009	Walleye	fry	4,250,000	42.5

Privately Stocked Fish

* indicates privately stocked fish. Private stocking includes fish purchased by the DNR for stocking and fish purchased and stocked by private citizens and sporting groups.

Stocking Fish Sizes

Fry - Newly hatched fish that are ready to be stocked usually called "swim-ups". Walleye fry are 1/3 of an inch or around 8 mm.

Fingerling - Fingerlings are one to six months old and can range from a size of one to twelve inches depending on the species. Walleye fingerlings range from three to eight inches each fall.

Yearling - Yearling fish are at least one year old. A one-year-old fish can range from three to twenty inches depending on the species. Walleye yearlings average from six to twelve inches.

Adult - Adult fish are fish that have reached maturity. Depending on the species, maturity can be reached at two years of age. Walleye reach maturity between the ages of four and six years.

Fish Consumption Guidelines

These **fish consumption guidelines** help people make choices about which fish to eat and how often. Following the guidelines enables people to reduce their exposure to contaminants while still enjoying the many benefits from fish.

Pregnant Women, Women who may become pregnant and Children under age 15

LAKE NAME County, DOWID	Species	Meal Advice				Contaminants
		Unrestricted	1 meal/week	1 meal/month	Do not eat	
SAGANAGA Cook Co., 16063300	Lake Trout		All sizes			Mercury
	Lake Whitefish		All sizes			Mercury
	Northern Pike		shorter than 21"	21" or longer		Mercury
	Smallmouth Bass			All sizes		Mercury
	Walleye		shorter than 14"	14" or longer		Mercury
	White Sucker		All sizes			Mercury
	Yellow Perch			All sizes		Mercury

General Population

LAKE NAME	Species	Meal Advice				Contaminants

County, DOWID		Unrestricted	1 meal/week	1 meal/month	Do not eat	
SAGANAGA Cook Co., 16063300	Lake Trout		All sizes			Mercury
	Lake Whitefish	All sizes				
	Northern Pike		shorter than 30"	30" or longer		Mercury
	Smallmouth Bass		All sizes			Mercury
	Walleye		All sizes			Mercury
	White Sucker	All sizes				
	Yellow Perch		All sizes			Mercury

DOWID - MN DNR, Division of Waters' lake ID number.

Contaminants listed were measured at levels that trigger advice to limit consumption.

Listing of consumption guidelines do not imply the fish are legal to keep, MN DNR **fishing regulations** should be consulted.

Dioxin

Mercury

PCBS - Polychlorinated biphenyls

PFOS - Perfluorooctane sulfanate

Status of the Fishery (as of 08/08/2011)

In 2011 Saganaga Lake continued to support a good mixed fishery. Although walleye abundance appeared to have been down, anglers willing to accept a mixed bag could still find excellent fishing by pursuing lake trout, northern pike, smallmouth bass, and lake whitefish.

The 2011 walleye gill net catch was the lowest seen in this lake since 1964, although it still fell within the normal range for a lake of this type (Ecological Class 1). The 2011 catch in shallow gill net sets (2.54 fish/set) fell well short of the walleye catch goal in the 2008 lake management plan (6.0 fish/shallow gill net set). The 2011 catch was dominated by a strong natural year class produced in 2007. Year classes supplemented by stocking (2009 and 2010) accounted for 21% of the walleye catch. Other year classes sampled had all been produced naturally, and it is likely that the two stocked year classes also had a significant natural component. Growth rates for young walleye had been average for the area. Walleye reached an average length of 14.2 inches at the end of their fourth year, compared to an average of 14.6 inches for similar lakes in the Grand Marais area. Few walleye older than four years of age were taken in the 2011 assessment.

One of the purposes of this assessment was to begin evaluating walleye fry stocking that had resumed in 2009. Prior to 2009, anglers had expressed concerns for several years about the scarcity of small walleye. Assessment and creel survey data supported their perceptions. The 2008 assessment indicated

that while natural reproduction continued to occur in Saganaga Lake, abundance of small walleye continued to be low, as indicated by low gill net catch rates for walleye under 12 inches in length. As a result, walleye fry stocking resumed in 2009, as outlined in the 2008 lake management plan.

Walleye fry stockings in 2009 and 2010 did not appear to have increased the number of small walleye present. Despite the presence of those two stocked year classes, the 2011 assessment yielded the lowest gill net catch rate seen to date in this lake for walleye smaller than 12 inches.

The 2011 assessment also yielded a lower-than-usual catch of large walleye. The catch of walleye 20 inches or larger in 2011 was 0.05 fish/set, the lowest catch of fish in that size range seen in this lake since 1964. Catches of 20-inch or larger fish had ranged from 0.43 to 0.68 fish/set in 1989-2004. Concern over low walleye catches in general in recent years had been tempered by the lake's continued ability to produce relatively high catches of fish larger than 20 inches. That ability appeared to have been eroded by 2008, and did not appear to have been recovering by 2011.

The 2011 lake trout gill net catch fell below the normal range for a lake of this type, but it was similar to catches seen in the past on Saganaga Lake, and the size of lake trout taken continued to be above average. The 2011 catch met the lake trout catch goal in the 2008 lake management plan. All lake trout taken in 2011 had been produced naturally. Several year classes were represented in the catch, with the strongest apparently produced in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Growth rates for young lake trout had been close to average for the area. Five-year-old fish reached an average length of 15.0 inches at the end of their fifth year.

The northern pike gill net catch continued to improve from a low observed in the 2004 assessment. The 2011 catch was above the normal range for a lake of this type, although the size of northern pike taken was below average (but still within the normal range). Several naturally produced year classes were represented in the catch, which included fish as old as nine years. Northern pike growth rates had been close to average for the area; three-year-old fish reached an average length of 19.7 inches at the end of their third year.

The smallmouth bass catch in 2011 was low for a lake of this type; however, it was similar to catches seen in the past on this lake. At an average weight of 1.66 lb, smallmouth bass taken in 2011 were considerably larger than average for a lake of this type. The low gill net catch is misleading - anglers have had no trouble finding excellent smallmouth bass fishing in this lake. No strong year classes were identified in this assessment, but several contributed to the catch. Smallmouth bass growth had been fast (at least among young fish), with fish reaching an average length of 9.0 inches at the end of their third year, compared to an area average of 7.0 inches.

Yellow perch have never been abundant in Saganaga Lake, and the 2011 catch was fairly typical. It fell within the normal range for a lake of this type, and was similar to past catches in this lake. Most of the yellow perch taken may have come from a single fairly strong year class, and all were small.

Lake whitefish and cisco populations, which provide excellent forage for walleye, northern pike, and lake trout, appear to have been holding their own in 2011, despite the continued presence of rainbow smelt. Catches for both were within normal ranges for the lake type. The lake whitefish population appeared to have been dominated by large adults, although fish of all sizes were present.

Saganaga Lake is infested with spiny waterflea, an exotic invertebrate. Anglers leaving the lake should take extra care to drain all live wells, bait buckets, and bilges, and thoroughly dry their boat and all ropes, lines, and other equipment before using them in another lake.

For more information on this lake, contact:

Area Fisheries Supervisor
1356 Hwy 61 E
Grand Marais, MN 55604
Phone: (218) 387-3056
Internet: **Grand Marais Fisheries**
E-Mail: **GrandMarais.Fisheries@state.mn.us**

Lake maps can be obtained from:

Minnesota Bookstore
660 Olive Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 297-3000 or (800) 657-3757
No depth map available.

For general DNR Information, contact:

DNR Information Center
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
TDD: (651) 296-6157 or (888) MINNDNR
Internet: **www.dnr.state.mn.us**
E-Mail: **info.dnr@state.mn.us**



Turn in Poachers (TIP):

Toll-free:
(800) 652-9093