

# Minnesota Fishing Report

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Anglers are reporting excellent bass and panfish action with the warmer water temperatures. Walleye action, however, has slowed somewhat due to the recent heat wave. Anglers throughout the state are finding some fish, especially when using live bait at the structure during low light hours.

## Northeast Minnesota

### International Falls - Rainy Lake and the Rainy River

Walleye fishing has been great on Rainy Lake, with fish congregating on reefs throughout the lake. For the most fish, try trolling a spinner rig tipped with a minnow or leech. Reefs on both sides of the Brule Narrows have been producing walleye, and a bite is still being reported in the larger bays in slightly shallower waters. Large northern pike are coming from Jackfish, Black, Cranberry, and Lost bays. Rainy River walleye are preferring shiner minnows on a spinner rig, and the small-mouth bass action has been good below the dam at International Falls. Mark your calendars for the upcoming International Falls Bass Championship to be held August 25-27.

## Grand Rapids

Anglers are reporting some fantastic bass action with the warmer water temperatures. For some great action, hit Pokegama Lake. Those looking for a fish dinner consisting of walleye, perch, and panfish are having success, but needing to put in a bit more time. Surface water temperatures are now in the high 70s on many area lakes, including Winnibigoshish, Sand, and Bowstring. For walleye, begin by following the weedlines in 10-12 feet of water. If these areas aren't producing, check the humps and bars with some gravel or rock. Try lindy rigs with a light sinker (1/8 oz.) and tipped with a leech for the most fish. Crawlers are producing some nice perch, and northern pike are coming in on jiggged minnows.

Some walleye anglers are finding fish both on top of the structure and off the sides of structure, depending on the conditions and where schools of baitfish are located. Watch your sonar for areas with the most baitfish – it may take several passes through to get the fish to bite. Once walleye have been found, mark the spot on your GPS so you can try again later.

Muskie anglers are finding a few active fish, but much like the walleye, the muskie will only feed when they need to. The best chance of catching a muskie has been during morning and evening hours, and on cloudy days. Some muskie anglers are finding fish after dark, especially when the moon is nearly full.

Perch have been slow to move back to the shallows where they would normally be this time of year. They usually move in to feed on the new hatches of minnows that have grown enough to be a viable food source. Perch also feed on crayfish hiding in the mats of chara covering the bottom of the shallow flats. Large schools of perch need huge amounts of food, so if the food is scarce, the perch will be scattered. The cold, rainy weather this spring slowed down weed growth in many lakes and may have led to poor minnow and baitfish hatches, which would limit the amount of food available in the shallows.

## Northwest Minnesota

### Baudette - Lake of the Woods and the Rainy River

The walleye seem to be enjoying the more reasonable temperatures and have become more cooperative on Lake of the Woods. In fact, crawlers, leeches, and minnows, jigged or drifted with spinners, have all produced nice numbers recently. Areas near Garden Island, The Bridges, and Little Oak have given up both quality and quantity.

## Bemidji

The hot temperatures will likely continue through the end of July, with surface water temperatures in most area lakes in the mid to upper 70s. Fishing has been

## Cass Lake

Walleye fishing remains spotty on Cass Lake, with most fish being taken on live bait worked in 20-25 foot depths. Jumbo

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perch are holding in 7-8 feet of water on the main lake. Panfish are extremely active on Cass, Pike Bay, and Kitchi lakes at the bulrush and cabbage areas in 4-6 foot depths. Muskie fishing remains excellent on area lakes.

**Walker - Leech Lake**

Recent hot temperatures have reduced walleye activity on Leech Lake. Anglers taking fish are working the main lake structure and the reefs and humps such as Mokey, Northland, and Huddles. The Duck Points area of Sucker Bay has also produced fish. In Walker Bay, the Sand and Cedar Point humps are giving up fish during evening hours.

Crawlers and leeches pulled with a bottom bouncer, spinner rig, or a lindy rig have been best during the day; anchoring with a leech under a bobber has been best during evening hours. Trolling crankbaits after dark has also worked in many parts of Leech Lake. Muskie action remains slow, but is expected to heat up very soon. Panfishing around Allens Point and in Shingobee Bay has been good.

**Detroit Lakes**

The bite remains fairly consistent, despite the extremely warm weather. Walleye are being pulled from 17-26 feet of water on most area lakes. There seems to be a consistent pattern of fish relating to the weeds, with leeches and crawlers working best. Panfish anglers have been doing well at the weed beds on the edges of the flats, and at the mid-lake weed beds close to deep water drop-offs. Bass are very active, hitting jigs tipped with suckers at the weed edges in 12-15 feet of water.

Some anglers are also reporting success when pitching crankbaits and spinners over the weed beds. Muskie action has been good on Big Detroit, Sallie, Pelican, and Battle lakes. Pitching and trolling have been the preferred method. Northern pike anglers are doing well on Melissa, Sallie, and Little McDonald lakes, with many fish

measuring 30-36 inches. Successful anglers are trolling crankbaits, pitching baits over weeds, and rigging large suckers at the deeper edges.

**Central Region**

**Brainerd Lakes Area**

Low-light walleye action has been best, with fish hitting leeches, nightcrawlers, and minnows worked in 16-25 feet on Gull, Pelican, and North Long lakes. Sucker minnows continue to produce northern pike at the 12-16 foot weedlines of most lakes. Bass are hitting plastics worked in the shallow and deep cover. The 10-15 foot weedlines of Gull, North Long, Margaret, and Round lakes are holding a mixed bag of panfish.

**Aitkin**

A good evening crappie bite is being reported on Cedar, Farm Island, and Bay lakes; fish the deep edge of the weedlines in 10-14 feet after 7:00 p.m. for the most fish. Bass are moving out to the deeper gravel areas in 12-18 feet of water. Bay and Cedar lakes have offered a good bite to anglers using drop shot rigs. Northern pike are very active in most area lakes. Walleye action has slowed somewhat.

On the north side of Lake Mille Lacs, trolling with lead core has been key to catching walleye. Many of the fish caught on the flats have measured 18-20 inches.

Be sure to graph the area you intend to fish before dropping a line. Trolling with spinners and nightcrawlers has been effective when covering a fair amount of area. Rigging at the breaks and pulling long lindy rigs with a large or jumbo leech has also worked well. Water temperatures have been hovering in the mid 70s.

**Isle/Onamia - Lake Mille Lacs**

The south end deep gravel edges and mud flats of Lake Mille Lacs are giving up the majority of walleye during the day. Start out moving fast with blades, and switch to a slower presentation once a school is located. Trolling mid-depth rocks is producing lots of nice keeper-size walleye. The evening rock bite has been good in 8 feet or more when bobber fishing or trolling with #5 shads. These techniques are also working well on windy, cloudy days. Please note that the walleye regulation has changed. Anglers must release immediately all walleye measuring 20-28 inches. Possession limit is four, with only one over 28 inches allowed.

**Twin Cities Area**

**White Bear Lake Area Lakes**

Fishing remains good on both White Bear and Bald Eagle lakes. Sunfish are hitting leeches and worms worked in roughly 6 feet of water. Bass are attacking leeches, as well as plastic worms on spinnerbaits. Northern pike are very active, hitting spinnerbaits, plugs, and spoon plugs. Walleye anglers are finding fish during evening hours when using leeches and fathead minnows. For the most fish, hit depths of 25 feet on White Bear Lake and 14-18 foot depths on Bald Eagle Lake. A few muskie are coming in on cowgirl-style lures, as well as topwater lures during morning and late evening hours.

**Lake Waconia**

Lake Waconia remains excellent for some great bass action! Anglers can find them in all types of terrain, such as reefs, the shallows, and at the breaklines. To start the day, grab a topwater bait and toss it into the shallow shorelines. Also check out Cemetery, Red's, or Center reefs using a spinnerbait or a jig tipped with a leech. Sunfish are also extremely active. Anglers finding nice keeper-sized fish are working the weed pockets near or on the reefs in 12-15 feet of water.

For the most fish, use a small jig tipped with a small leech or waxworm at Center, North, and Kegs reefs. Please be aware that some species get more aggressive when the water temperatures turn warm; if you plan to catch and release your fish, please take extra care not to overtire them since heat makes it more difficult for fish to recover.



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