

CANOE TO CANADA - FISHING GUIDE



Jul 2019

Troop 39 – Matthews, NC

“Wilderness to the people of America is a spiritual necessity, an antidote to the high pressure of modern life, a means of regaining serenity and equilibrium.”

-Sigurd Olson (MN author and conservationist)

Foreword:

I created this guide for the Scouts and Leaders of Troop 39 who are attending the 2019 Canoe to Canada trip. I hope that you use this guide to improve your chances of catching a fish by gaining an understanding of the types of fish, gear, and proven techniques for the Boundary Waters. My participation in the S5-415-19 Wood Badge Course prompted me to create this document. One of my "ticket" goals from the course was to become a BSA Certified Angler and teach Scouts of Troop 39 fishing skills to use on this trip as well as provide a base for future training and fishing courses in the future.

I gathered content for this guide from my participation in the BSA Certified Angling Instructor Program, research of the Boundary Waters Fishing Forum, and from John Woodhall III who is the Minnesota Area Lead for the BSA Certified Angling Instructor Program. John has made over 70 trips into the Boundary Waters and also teaches the guides during staff training at the BSA Northern Tier. I had the pleasure of meeting John through the CAI network and I used his expertise and local knowledge in creating this guide.

Tight lines!

Mr. Sessa

Assistant Scout Master Troop 39, BSA Certified Angling Instructor, Buffalo Patrol Member S5-415-19



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TROOP 39 – MATTHEWS, NC

LOCATION

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) is a one-million-acre wilderness area in northeastern Minnesota. The area has a mixture of forests, glacial lakes, and streams. Fishing is a popular activity among BWCAW visitors and Troop 39 will have the ability to catch fish species that are not available to our location in the south eastern US.



From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

SPECIES OF FISH

There are many types of fish in the BWCAW. As a result of my research, I choose to highlight the 4 most sought-after game fish (Smallmouth Bass, Walleye, Northern Pike, and Lake Trout). Many anglers claim that “pound for pound” the Smallmouth Bass is the hardest fighting and most aggressive of **ALL** fresh water fish. They may not reach the size of the Northern Pike but they are a blast to catch. The Walleye has a reputation of being the best tasting of the fish from the BWCAW. The Northern Pike are the big boys and have extremely sharp teeth. The Lake Trout will probably be in much deeper water mid-summer and the chances of catching one of these is slim.

Fish like structure and I challenge you to remember this before randomly casting your line in the water. BSA Certified Angling Instructor John Woodall recommends that we study our topographical maps and look for hills at the edge of the water. Those hills should continue into the water. Fish these areas.

Mr. Woodall also explained that Smallmouth Bass like to remain in schools. If you catch one, chances are high that the bass was not alone. He also explained that Northern Pike are territorial and like to patrol areas alone. The action on the Walleyes will slow down in mid-summer as these fish will be in the deeper parts of the lakes.

Smallmouth Bass

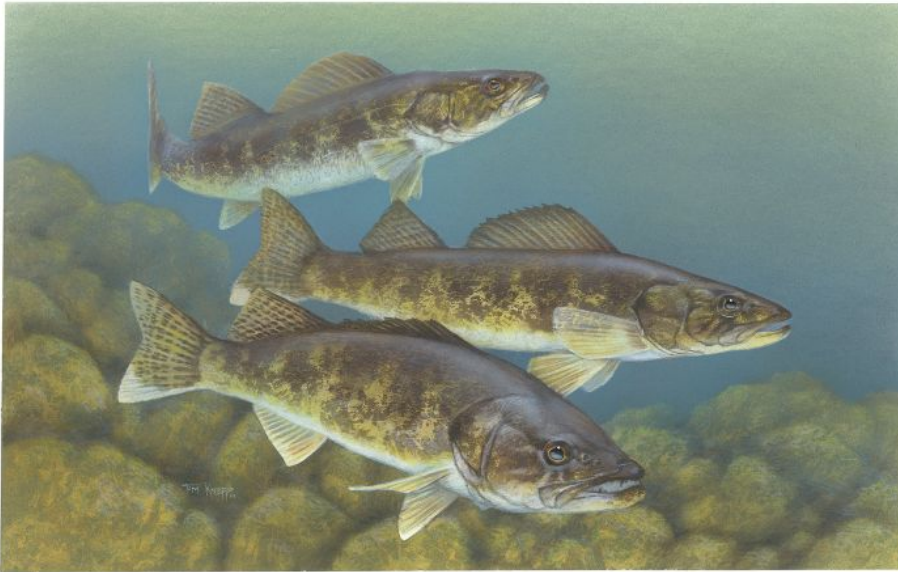
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



The smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*) is a species of freshwater fish in the sunfish family (Centrarchidae) of the order Perciformes. It is the type species of its genus. One of the black basses, it is a popular game fish sought by anglers throughout the temperate zones of North America, and has been spread by stocking—as well as illegal introductions—to many cool-water tributaries and lakes in Canada and more so introduced in the United States. The maximum recorded size is approximately 27 inches and 12 pounds. The smallmouth bass is native to the upper and middle Mississippi River basin, the Saint Lawrence River–Great Lakes system, and up into the Hudson Bay basin. Its common names include smallmouth, bronzeback, brown bass, brownie, smallie, bronze bass, and bareback bass.

Walleye

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



The walleye (*Sander vitreus*, synonym *Stizostedion vitreum*), also called the yellow pike, is a freshwater perciform fish native to most of Canada and to the Northern United States. It is a North American close relative of the European zander, also known as the pikeperch. The walleye is sometimes called the yellow walleye to distinguish it from the blue walleye, which is a subspecies that was once found in the southern Ontario and Quebec regions, but is now presumed extinct. However, recent genetic analysis of a preserved (frozen) 'blue walleye' sample suggests that the blue and yellow walleye were simply phenotypes within the same species and do not merit separate taxonomic classification.

In parts of its range in English-speaking Canada, the walleye is known as a pickerel, though the fish is not related to the true pickerels, which are a member of the family Esocidae.

Walleyes show a fair amount of variation across watersheds. In general, fish within a watershed are quite similar and are genetically distinct from those of nearby watersheds. The species has been artificially propagated for over a century and has been planted on top of existing populations or introduced into waters naturally devoid of the species, sometimes reducing the overall genetic distinctiveness of populations.

Northern pike

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

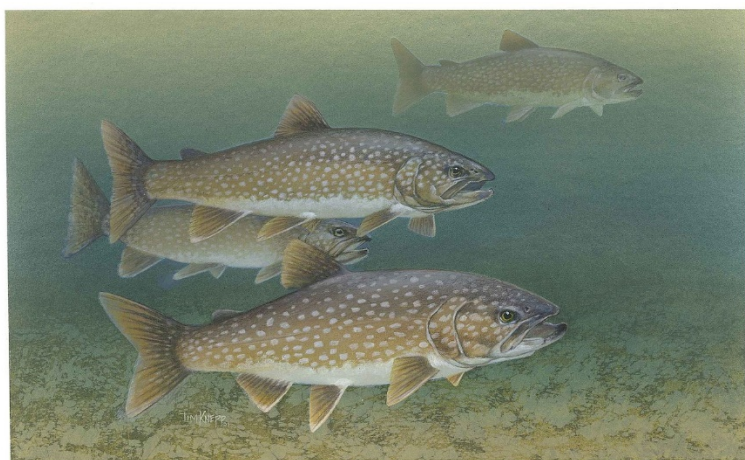


The northern pike (*Esox lucius*), known simply as a pike in Britain, Ireland, most of Canada, and most parts of the United States (once called luce when fully grown; also called jackfish or simply "northern" in the U.S. Upper Midwest and in Manitoba or Saskatchewan), is a species of carnivorous fish of the genus *Esox* (the pikes). They are typical of brackish and fresh waters of the Northern Hemisphere (i.e. holarctic in distribution).

Pike can grow to a relatively large size: the average length is about 40–55 cm (16–22 in), with maximum recorded lengths of up to 150 cm (59 in) and published weights of 28.4 kg (63 lb).[2] The IGFA currently recognizes a 25 kg (55 lb) pike caught by Lothar Louis in Lake on Grefeern, Germany, on 16 October 1986, as the all-tackle world-record northern pike.

Lake trout

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) is a freshwater char living mainly in lakes in northern North America. Other names for it include mackinaw, namaycush, lake char (or charr), touladi, togue, and grey trout. In Lake Superior, it can also be variously known as siscowet, paperbelly and lean. The lake trout is prized both as a game fish and. Those caught with dark coloration may be called mud hens.

TACKLE

Remember that whatever you pack, you will have to carry. Our longest portage will be around 1 mile and you do not want to bring your entire tackle box. I recommend a small plastic box with your favorite lures. Here is an example packed with my recommended list of lures for the BWCAW.



Rod and Reel

Medium Light or Medium 2-piece Spinning Rod
6-10 lb test line with a wire leader

I don't recommend spending a lot of money on a fancy rod and reel combo. Your rod may get banged up on the trip and you don't want to damage an expensive piece of equipment. You should be able to find a suitable rod and reel combo for under \$45. I recommend the Shakespeare "Ugly Stik." The rods are well built and economical. Costco sells a nice combo and you can also find them at Wal-Mart, Academy, and Cabela's/Bass Pro.

For fishing line, I recommend monofilament. It is inexpensive and I find it easier to use than braided fishing lines. Pick whatever monofilament fits your budget. I recommend wire leaders for the pike in the area. These fish have sharp teeth and will break the monofilament line.

Soft Plastics

I recommend soft plastics as the "work horse" of your tackle box for this trip. Other lures can get expensive and cost you in weight that you have to carry. Grubs are a staple according to many BWCAW anglers. I learned from my research that the bottom is rocky and we will lose many lures. It not that big of a deal if

you lose a jig head and plastic lure. Also, the plastic worm has to be one of the all-time favorite lures. I illustrate the many possibilities of fishing these in the Techniques section.

3-inch Grubs in multiple colors

Twister Tails

Worms/stick baits

Swimbbaits



Jig Heads

These are weighted hooks (1/8-1/4 oz). Use these in conjunction with the plastic grubs and twister tails.



Spoons

Red and White Daredevil spoon and a Johnson Silver Spoon



Surface Lures

Nothing is more exciting than watching a fish slam the surface of the water to hit your lure. Tie one of these on while fishing the banks at camp either early in the morning or late in the evening. The smallmouth may be patrolling the shallows at these times.

Rapala minnow – 3 inch

Popper



Spinner Baits

Rooster Tail type inline spinner and a Beetle Spin



Crank Baits

Rattletrap – lure that mimics a small bait fish. It has loose parts on the inside that rattle and attract fish.
Rapala Shad Rap



Knots

The Palomar and the Uni are my favorite knots. Remember to wet your line as you pull these tight.



Photo from Pro-Knot tm

Other Gear

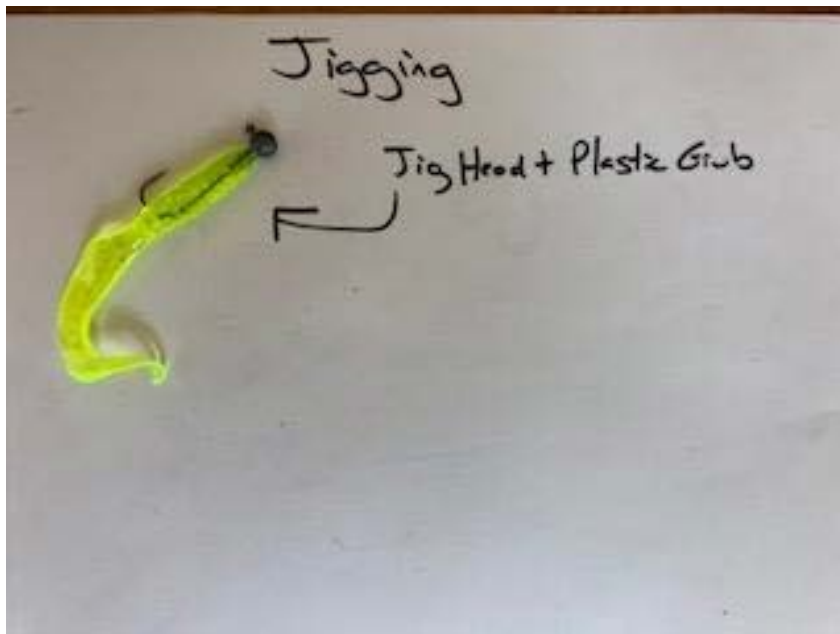
- 1/4 oz Casting Sinker (used for drop shot technique)
- Hooks
- Split shot weight
- Steel leaders – used when targeting Pike. Pike have sharp teeth and can cut your mono line off.
- Needle Nose Pliers / Forceps – use for hook removal. Don't put your fingers in that Pike's mouth!!!
- Stringer – bring this if you want to catch your dinner
- Filet Knife
- Small cutting board or just use the canoe oar or a flat rock
- Net



TECHNIQUES

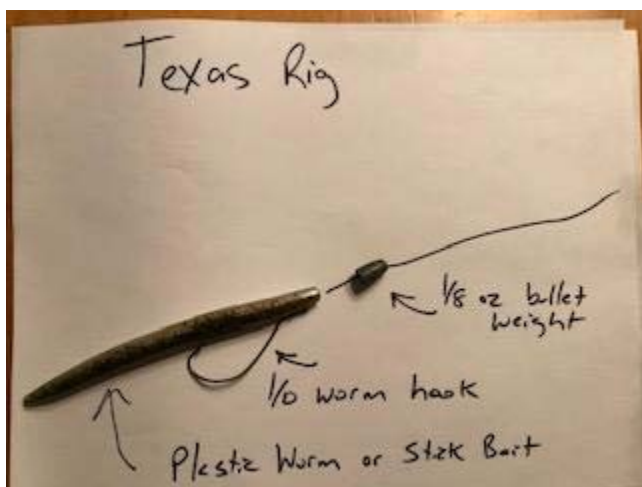
Jigging

- Use a Jig head and a soft plastic of your choice
- Cast out and either use a slow and steady retrieve or bounce off the bottom.



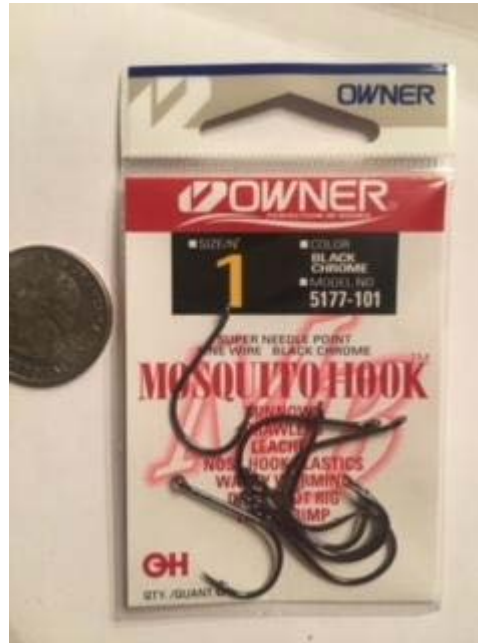
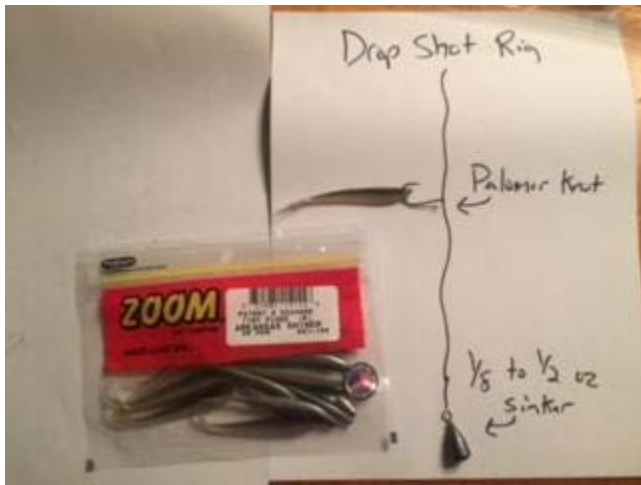
Texas Rig

- Use a plastic worm or stick bait and a worm hook. You can also use a bullet weight as pictured below or fish weightless.
- I recommend this when fishing areas with heavy cover as it is a “weed less” set-up.



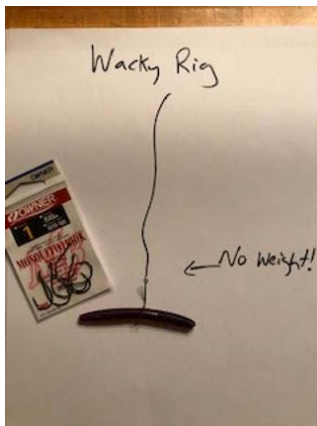
Drop Shot

The Drop Shot Rig is made by tying your hook onto the line with a Palomar Knot and then tying a 1/8 oz or 1/2 oz sinker 12 to 24 inches below the hook. You can use basically any soft plastic bait (worm, grub, minnow, etc.) with this rig. In this example, I am using a 2-inch plastic shiner with a size 1 Mosquito Hook. You just cast out or drop the line straight down. Your lure will automatically sit above the bottom without sinking. It will magically suspend in the “strike zone” waiting for a fish to take it. You don’t have to constantly retrieve this presentation.



Wacky Rig

The Wacky Rig is one of the easiest techniques I know of when it comes to fishing soft plastics. In this example I used a size 1 hook and a 4-inch stick bait. You can use any size stick bait or “Senko” type plastics. Simply hook the bait in the middle as pictured, cast out and let the bait slowly drop to the bottom. The stick bait will flutter and the fish normally take this on the fall. Just line in the slack, lift rod tip and let fall.



Surface Lures

These are the floating Rapalas and poppers pictured earlier.

The Lures create a lot of noise on surface.

Vary speed and create pauses in your retrieve.

Nothing is more exciting than seeing a bass crush the surface to take your lure!

Spoons, Spinner Baits, and Crank Baits

Experiment with your retrieval to find what works. The spoons and spinner baits create a lot of flash and noise. Look out for that Northern Pike when using these and I recommend the steel leader. The crank baits move in an erratic swimming pattern mimicking an injured baitfish. You can add split shot weights to get these down lower in the water column if needed.

Barbed vs. Barbless Hooks

There is much debate on this subject. A barb is the pointed section below the tip of the hook. Many claim that removing the barb of the hook causes less damage to the fish during hook removal. Barb removal can be accomplished simply by flattening the barb with your pair of pliers or by purchasing barbless hooks.

Many areas have restrictions that require barbless fishing such as some of our local trout streams with native trout or just across the US Canadian border in Quetico Provincial Park. There is a movement from many organizations to promote barbless fishing. At this time, there is no requirement to fish barbless from BSA or the BWCWA so the choice is yours!

REGULATIONS

Barbed hooks are allowed.

Live bait is allowed

Refer to the 2019 Minnesota Fishing Regulations for complete details.

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/fishing/fishing_regs.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=bookmarks

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Dr. Patrick Curley – BSA Certified Angling Instructor – Area 7

John Woodall III – BSA Certified Angling Instructor, CAI Area Lead MN

Boundary Waters Quetico Forum

<https://bwca.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=forum.enterForum&confid=1&forumid=14&action=enterForum>

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Wikipedia contributors. (2019, March 31). Walleye. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 20:13, April 10, 2019, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walleye>

Pro-Knot tm Proknot.com