

The April

20 Cents

# OUTERS'- RECREATION



*Special Fishing Number*

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# Outers' Book—Recreation

*Edited by Dan B. Starkey*

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Our camp on Rest Lake, near the Indian Camp on the west shore

# The Fishing Grounds of Rest Lake

By E. C. Potter

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a very valuable series of articles describing Northern Wisconsin lakes in such detail as to furnish fishermen an accurate guide to the fishing grounds on the lakes covered. The series has been a long time in preparation, but we are now able to make a beginning and the articles will appear month after month for an indefinite period. We hope, before the series ends, to cover a very considerable part of the Wisconsin Wonderland. The utmost care has been exercised in gathering the data and we believe the information contained in these articles will be found absolutely reliable. Mr. Potter, who is writing the series, is a very thorough investigator, who has visited the lakes personally, and is making no statements that he has not verified. The maps are being made by Rand, McNally & Co., the big Chicago map publishers, which is a guarantee of their accuracy.

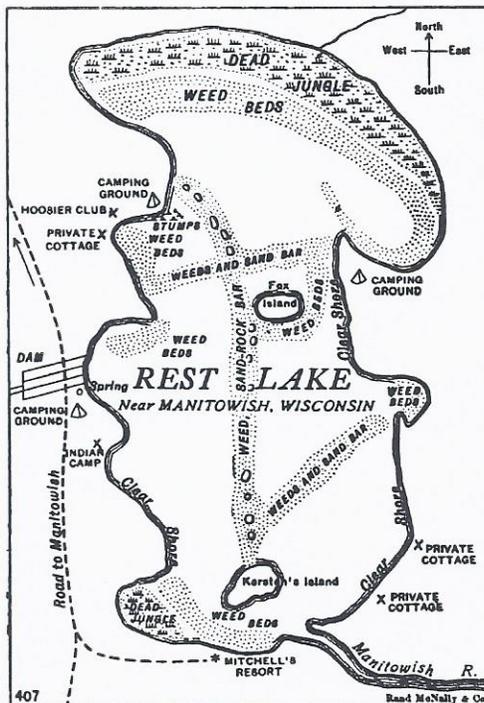
EVERY time I go fishing to a new place I feel like taking a pot-shot at the resort keeper because he doesn't furnish me a map of the fishing grounds in his "gosh darned" lake. I don't hate fishing or anything—on the contrary, it's easy for me to go fishing any old time, but I can't see the joke in going on a week-end trip to a new lake, and spending the biggest part of it exploring the lake to find out where to fish. There's

no getting away from the fact, though, that if you want to catch fish you've got to have some idea what part of the lake to fish in. We all know how to catch smallmouths on sand bars and bigmouths around logs and stumps, and pike and muskies around weed beds, and a lot of

things like that, and most of us know enough to blame the poor fishing of a glassy day in August on the weather instead of on the resort keeper of his lake, but what we don't know oftentimes at a strange lake is to tell, from where you sit, just where the weed beds and stumps and other things are.

And I've found a lot of other fellows that feel the same way. Now, I've fished Rest Lake in the Manitowish chain quite a bit and caught some fish, and I'm going to give you boys a description of the shore lines, and what you can expect, so if you go up there any time this summer you'll have a little idea of what you're up against when you start to try out that new bait. I'm not afraid of you catching all my fish, for I don't get up more than two or three times a summer, and then the Manitowish chain is big, there's nine good lakes in it: Rest, Island, Spider, Stone, Mud, Clear, Manitowish, Alder and Rice, all connected by the Manitowish River, and there's lots of fish in all of them, so if any of you fellows think you can catch 'em all, go to it and see if I care.

One of the things I especially like about the Manitowish country is that it's primitive. It's wild; as wild and primal as any country I ever saw, less thickly settled than the territory a little further south, and if you can gaze across its broad expanse of lake and timber line and see any vestige of stone



Location of fishing grounds in Rest Lake

walls and cobblestones you've got an imagination that's beyond mine. To my mind one of the most delightful trips in the great North Woods is a journey through the entire chain. It's all wild, but each lake is a different vista of charming primal beauty. The channel is deep enough to take most any power boat and there's about a dozen resorts on the chain, but none of them are the electric-light, board-walk variety—they are primitive, many of them log cottages as in the days of the early settlers, in an environment genuinely wild.

**T**HE best way, in fact the only convenient way to get to Rest Lake is on the Chicago & North Western, getting off at their Manitowish station. They have a train leaving Chicago and Milwaukee in the evening that gets up to Manitowish just about daylight, and as the liverymen always meet it with their autos you get out to the resorts just in time to get a good breakfast and an early start on your fishing.

When I go to Rest Lake I usually go to Mitchell's. It's a good resort about twelve miles from the town of Manitowish and I've always found the cats and sleeps excellent. They set a good table and lots of it, and their beds are nice and clean. Buck & Son run the livery at Manitowish and make trips anywhere you want to go very reasonable. In fact the average charge from Manitowish to Mitchell's is only \$1.50, as they usually have at least three people for each car going out to the resorts. Of course a special trip for one or two people would raise the ante a little; and, by the way, that auto trip from Manitowish to Mitchell's in the early morning is one of the most delightful in the whole north country. The road is mostly a woody trail along the bank of the Manitowish River, and it's a beauty, although the timber is somewhat more cut now than it used to be.

Now, I've made a sketch of the fishing grounds in the lake and sent it to the editor, and if he sees fit to spend a few dollars and have a map made out of it, I'll vote him a good sport, and I know you will, too. Anyway this is the way we found the fishing grounds last September, and I haven't heard of any earthquake or anything up there last winter, although the guides say the big muskies and the ice push the stumps around some occasionally, but it's not probable they change it enough to make much difference.

**T**HE good grounds commence right in front of Mitchell's boat landing. In fact there were a couple of women there last year—their husbands had gone out fishing and wouldn't take them along, so they got in a boat and went out by themselves and after fishing about a half an hour they hooked a twenty-five pound musky that dragged them most all over the lake before some men came along and shot it for them.

Leaving Mitchell's boat landing and starting down the west shore of the lake first you strike a bay that is a jungle of dead trees, logs and stumps with a weed bed in front of it. There's probably been



*A 14-lb. Rest Lake musky. The majority of catches in the Manitowish chain are from 10 to 20 lbs., but landing a 30-pounder creates no surprise*

as many big fish caught around this weed bed as any one place in the lake. You can't fish back in this bay to any advantage because there isn't one chance in a hundred you'd ever land a fish you hooked—he would take a half-hitch of the line around a stump and then come up and stand on his tail and laugh at you, and if you went to hit him with an oar he'd shake out the hook and hike back in the jungle, but if you'll fish out around the weed bed you'll pretty quick snag onto one of those investigative old fellows that has come out of the jungle and is prowling around looking for a chance to turn some other smaller fish into a musky. There's quite a clear channel here in front of the weed bed, and you shouldn't have any occasion to tell how you "just about got him up to

the boat and then," etc. On still evenings when the fish are feeding, this bay, back among the stumps, is a constant ripple and splash which shows where the fish are all right.

**F**ROM this bay, all the way north, down the west side of the lake, the shore line is sand, coarse gravel and rocks, and the deep water runs pretty close to the shore. There are a number of small bays, however, and in most of them are quite a few stumps and fallen trees, making a good place to cast for bass and pike. This same character of shore line continues pretty well down to the dam. Just before you reach the dam is a good place to camp. There is a clear, bubbling spring there and the shore is level and clean. Going on past the dam you

will find some very good grounds, several weed beds on a sand bottom and some stumps and fallen trees. Soon you will come to another dead jungle like the one in the bay across from Mitchell's, but just before you come to it, right on the point, marked by a few snags and deadheads, starts a sand bar that runs clear across the lake to the island just east of Mitchell's.

**N**OW, while we're here I'll tell you about this bar, as you know bars in the middle of lakes are usually the places you catch the most fish. On a clear day if the surface of the water is still you can see this bar under your boat practically all the way across the lake, and that's the time to get lined up in your memory with shore landmarks so you won't lose it when you go out on a cloudy, ripply day. The bar zigzags somewhat and in some places runs down pretty deep, but there are weeds on the bottom all along that make excellent cover from which the big ones will come out with a rush as your bait goes over them. Along this bar is an excellent place to troll or still-fish with live bait on a warm day, and when the fish won't bite along the shore you are always pretty sure of a nice catch if you will work along this bar.

As you go on around the shore from the starting point of this bar you come to the north shore of the lake, where you will have to turn southeast. This is a big jungle of dead trees, stumps and fallen logs and you can't get a boat around through it, but out in front of it, the same as at the one across from Mitchell's, there are many weed beds all the way around to the point and all of this is good casting grounds for bass, pike and muskies. By the way, what killed this timber was the building of the dam years ago by the lumbermen to float their logs down from the lakes above, this having backed the water up onto the low timber land. This jungle extends on around northeast into a bay on the east side of the lake, and the bay is particularly good pike and muskie grounds. There is a good growth of weeds on the bottom and quite a few fallen trees and a lot of good-sized muskies have been caught here. The weeds don't get high enough to snag your hook till pretty late in the fall.

**C**OMING out of the bay you come to a point or sort of peninsula which is an excellent place to cast or still-fish for small-mouths. The best place for small-mouths is always around a rock or gravel bar, as these fish seem more partial to that kind of a feeding ground than any other. This point extends quite a way out into the lake and shelters the bays on both sides, providing a splendid place to fish on windy days when other parts of the lake get too rough.

As this peninsula has quite a bend to it and a bay on each side you hardly ever find the wind in such a quarter that one of these bays is not pretty quiet water. Continuing on

## The Fishing Reel

By George B. Staff

Spin it and listen, listen while it sings

Of the lure of rippling waters,  
And the call of outdoor things,  
With a music that is clearer and a  
melody that's dearer  
To the heart of every angler than a  
symphony for kings.

Spin it and listen, listen as it tells

Of a nook of shady waters,  
Where a big old husky dwells,  
That has baffled every baiting and that's  
full of fight and waiting  
For his ancient foe, the angler, who  
would win him with his spells.

Spin it and listen, listen while it calls

To a waiting world of wonders  
Out beyond the office walls;  
How the music of its whirring starts the  
fishing fever stirring,  
With a hankering for old shoes, easy  
shirts, and overalls.

Spin it and listen, it will win you with  
its song;

You'll forget the daily duty,  
And let business limp along;  
As you leave the city riot and fare  
forth into the quiet  
Of the outdoors, where your natural self  
can flourish and grow strong!

around the shore you find more bays near by with vegetable growth on the bottom, which are all excellent spots for pike and musky, then you come to a clear water sand and gravel shore which continues on around to the island close to Mitchell's. This is a sort of lowland shore, but it is not swampy and makes an excellent bathing beach and camping ground. This is a good place to rest your casting arm and troll a while. Following the shore line, you come to a narrow channel between the island and the main land. While we didn't take any soundings it looks as though when the water is low there wouldn't be enough water at the extreme south end of this channel to let you through, but it is a good speculation, always, to fish around the island—it is good for trolling—as some big ones have been caught there. This island is the other end of the sand-rock-weed bar that runs clear across almost the whole length of the lake.

Just after you pass the island you come

It is the correspondence of the soul of a man with his environment that makes angling worth while. When the catching of many fish causes us to forget our surroundings, blinds our eyes to the beauties of Nature and deadens our ears to the Music of the Wild, we cease to be true anglers.

—O. W. Smith.

to the mouth of the Manitowish River where it enters Rest Lake and along here and up to Mitchell's boat landing is good grounds. This is a sand shore, but with high banks and a rather abrupt drop of bottom with rather deep water fairly close to shore, so you'll want to keep pretty close to shore. There's an occasional stump or fallen tree sticking up that makes good cover for these old pirates that like to lay around under something and watch for some unfortunate young one to come along, so your bait is likely to be taken for something good to eat most any minute.

**T**HIS south end of the lake has several reasons for being pretty good grounds. Being at the mouth of the river, there is a tendency for more or less feed to be washed into the lake here; the jungle bay over west with its weed bed in front is excellent cover, spawning ground, etc., and the bars and sand and gravel shores offer another variation of loafing place for some of the particularly prosperous fish that do not find it takes all of their time to make a living. Never having been the particular kind of fish that spends all his time in the water, I am naturally not thoroughly conversant with their habits, but it would seem perfectly logical that a fish should enjoy the diversion of occupation of roaming around for a while on a nice, clean, sunshiny sand bar and then going over and prowling through a weed bed, the same as man, bird and beast like to do, one thing for a while and then go do something else—anyway, we know we catch 'em part of the time on a sand bar and at other times around the stumps and weed beds.

While there are lots of bass and pike in Rest Lake, it, as the rest of the Manitowish chain, is ordinarily considered more of a musky lake than a field for the other varieties. There are lots of muskies in the entire chain. There's been a lot caught that weighed 30 to 40 lbs., there's a lot of 20 pounders; they're really the best fish both to catch and to eat, and even a 10-pounder is nothing to get disgusted about. There is an occasional perch, and the pike are the wall-eye, or pike-perch; at least I have not seen any of the Great Northern variety caught there, and there are no pickerel in their waters.

**W**HILE the Great Northern pike will be found quite plentiful in certain Wisconsin lakes that are tributary to the Mississippi, they seem to be more abundant over east of the divide in the Ontonagon, Presque Isle, Turtle and other tributary waters of Lake Superior. How do you account for it? Never mind, now; I can't conceive of any subject on which more diversified and positive opinions can instantly burst upon one like a rain of shrapnel than are launched when one begins to comment upon the why of a fish, but wouldn't it be nice to know for sure just why, when and where a fish does this and that and the other?