

2017 Northeast Glacial Lakes Fishing Forecast – Lake Traverse

Presented by Fishermens Net Guide Service LLC

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It's safe to say that most of the lakes from HWY 212 and south are ice free. Going north of HWY 212 there are some lakes that have ice and will have for a week or two. It'll all depend on high temperatures and wind conditions. If we can get some rain and wind the lakes further north will completely open up soon.

Last week we reviewed Big Stone Lake so this week we'll continue northward and pick up Lake Traverse along the South Dakota, Minnesota border.

Lake Traverse (SD/MN Border Water) – At 16 miles long Lake Traverse has the reputation of producing big walleyes and it does. Walleyes are the most sought after game fish on Lake Traverse and the lakes population is strong. I would call it a high quality walleye fishery with a good population of trophy size walleyes as well. And like Big Stone, Traverse benefits from both natural reproduction and stocking of walleye fry. Minnesota stocked 6 million walleye fry each year in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2016.

MN DNR last surveyed the lake in May 2014 and results show a very healthy population of walleye, perch, white bass, catfish and other species. The number of walleye captured (27 fish per net vs. 3 – 15) is above the normal range compared to lakes with similar characteristics. The average weight of captured walleyes was 1.34 lbs compared to a normal average of similar lakes of .9 to 1.9 lbs. In 2014 captured walleyes ranging from 12" to 18" were abundant. Giving the upcoming April 22, 2017 border opener we should see some nice fish caught.

If you're not familiar with Traverse I would suggest reviewing a contour map and have a Lake Master Chip in your depth finder. Especially fishing around the islands and the NW portion of the lake where shallow reefs exist. But these areas also produce nice fish! It's just common sense and once familiar with the area you shouldn't have any problems.

If you're a cat fisherman you'll like Lake Traverse! There is a good population of catfish and they're nice. The MN DNR's averaged 3 ½ pound fish in their nets.

Lake Traverse also hosts some nice bluegills. Fish the windblown rocky points using Northland Tackles Impulse Rigged Slug Bug or their Fire Fly jig under a slip bobber. Use the jigs as is or tip them with bait.

Traverse also has a strong population of White Bass. Gill net rates were 10 white bass per net compared to 1 – 7 for lakes that are similar and they averaged 1 ½ pounds. And I'll say it again, they are good table fare. After you filet them just keep the loin (the back strap above the rib cage to the tail) and make sure you trim off the red meat mud line. It's a great fish to use at a neighborhood fish fry and there is NO daily limit of white bass on Lake Traverse.

Didn't see your favorite lake? Check in next week as we'll highlight other lakes in Northeast South Dakota. Also, check out our Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/fishermensnetsd/>