

NOTE: the DRUC assumes NO responsibility, direct or implied, for the safety of diving at this site using this information.€ The information in this report presents general information on conditions and certain known hazards, but conditions are variable and other hazards may exist from time to time.€ It is every diver's own/personal responsibility to ensure that the conditions are adequately safe with respect to his/her training and experience – THIS INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT YOUR OWN RISK!

Dive Report – Owl Lake (Bissett area)

On June 23rd, after the Petawawa River evening dive, a discussion between club members at the local wings and brew place led to a decision to dive Owl Lake on the 30th (a small Speckled Trout lake in the lakeland area southeast of Bissett Creek). Overall, the lake offered fair access conditions, poor to moderate visibility, very little structure or marine life and had limited depth and would be considered low on the dive site ratings, but of course, we all had a great time anyway.

Attractions

We chose Owl Lake as a dive site destination because of relatively easy access within one hour of Deep River and because of a known dock to provide convenient equipment handling. Several members had fished the lake for Speckled Trout in the past and were interested in investigating this type of underwater environment.

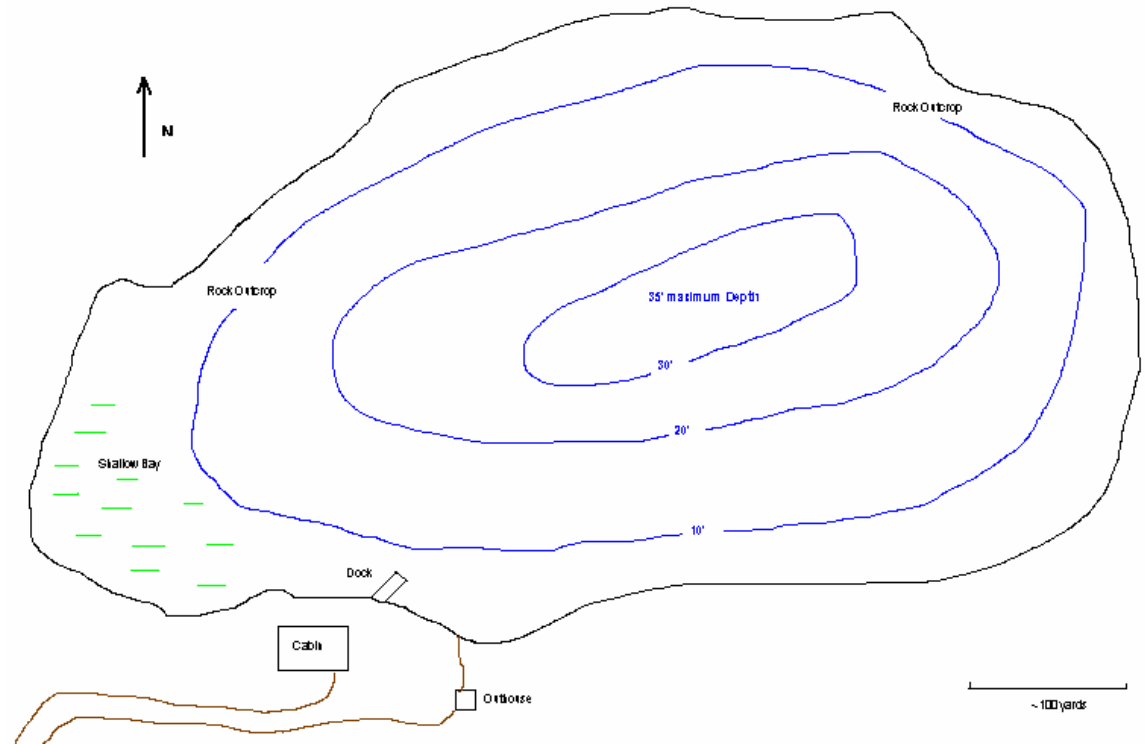
Site Overview

This lake is small and oval shaped with the short axis about 400 yards north to south and the long axis about 600m east to west. The road end/clearing area with dock and hunt camp and outhouse is at the southwest end of the lake. Beside the dock is a shallow, sandy area for an easy entry, dropping off gradually to the soft, silty bottom generally found on most of the lake. A small shallow area is located just a few meters along the shore northwest of the dock. Further north and east along the shoreline (approximately 100 yard swim) is one of the lakes two rock outcrops (the second being about 600 yards straight out northeast across the lake from the dock).

Visibility was 5 to 10 feet and silt proved to whip up quickly and cloud everything to reduce the VIS even further. A dive straight out across the lake toward the farthest rock outcrop showed some gradual water temperature change with maximum depth down to 35', but the most dramatic temperature changes were noticed at around 15 to 20' below each of the rocky outcrop areas. Visibility was also improved at these locations possibly indicating that the lake is spring-fed at below both of the rock areas. The shorelines provided about 15' depth of fallen trees and banks to explore and the rock outcrops had boulders from 1' to 6' diameter scattered about down to about 20'. Below these depths the murky, structure-less, silty bottom provided little to see.

Although we tried diligently to spot the elusive Speckled Trout, we were not rewarded with a sighting on this trip. Many large, tadpoles the size of tennis balls skittered between the rocks and trees and schools of 1" to 3" long Rock Bass were abundant along the shorelines. The mosquitoes were waiting for us after the dive and repellent seemed to have no effect on these voracious carnivores. We left them very well fed that night.

Site Diagram



Access

It takes about 60 minutes travel time from Deep River to the shore of the lake. A vehicle with good clearance is needed because of rough sections of the road (pickup truck or SUV), but 4WD is not needed.

The lake is accessed by travelling approximately 15 km west along Highway 17 to Menet Lake Road (just after passing under the railway overpass). Then travel 12 km on a fair gravel road (with some wet areas and rubble inclines) to a bridge passing over Grants Creek. Turn right off of the main road at the second lane past the bridge. Travelling less than 1 km back over another bridge on Grants Creek will bring you to the southeast end of the lake. The road ends at a seldom-used hunt camp, which also has an outhouse, a dock, picnic table and fire pit all on leased crown land. A note from Marc Audet contains useful information about the access to this property.

“The access to Owl Lake is via a hunt camp. The land in that area is all crown land (public property), but the camp was established on a 99 year lease (1 acre or so), which means that although the leasees do not own the land, they have a right to restrict access to their leased plot of land. The leasees do not have a right to restrict access to the lake (public property), so in the case of the setup at OWL, there's a conflict in "rights". Anyway, a condition of the lease agreement is that the property is to be only used a minimal amount of time (e.g., not a permanent or semi-permanent (seasonal) residence), and most often the camps are used this

way, so there will probably be nobody at the camp tonight. If someone is there, some up-front diplomacy is needed to ensure that your access to the lake occurs without incident. I'm sure that there will not be a problem, but its good to know the rules up front.”

Hazards

Minimal – it is recommended that travel is carried out in with two vehicles, in case of a mishap in this remote area (given the poor condition of the road in places).

Recommendations

I would NOT recommend this site for diving. It offers very little structure or marine life to view and silts up quickly. It is, however, a great place to take a kid out on a canoe for an afternoon.

This site qualifies for the DRUC BOTTOM-TEN list.