



# Outers' Book—Recreation

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*A Manitowish shore line—submerged stumps and brush on a sand-gravel bed*

# The Center of the Manitowish Chain

## *Spider Lake Beds and Bars*

By E. C. POTTER

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

*Editor's Note: This is the third of a series in OUTER BOOK-RECREATION of description of the fishing grounds in the Manitowish Waters, a short distance east of Manitowish, Wis. Previous chapters of this series were: In April issue, Rest Lake; in May issue, Dam, Sturgeon and Benson Lakes, or the Manitowish River Below the Dam. Each chapter is a description of one or more lakes, and illustrated with map and photographs by the author.*

WHILE traveling up the Manitowish chain by water from Rest Lake you come first to Stone Lake, but this month I will describe Spider Lake, which is virtually the center of the Manitowish chain, for it is the first lake above Rest Lake on which it is particularly desirable for one to make his headquarters during a vacation. Near the center of the south shore of Spider Lake is the Spider Lake resort, comprising a main lodge and fourteen cottages, and just to the east on the next bay are Voss Bros' summer cottages, known as Birchwood Lodge. There are five cottages here, varying from two to six rooms, which they rent

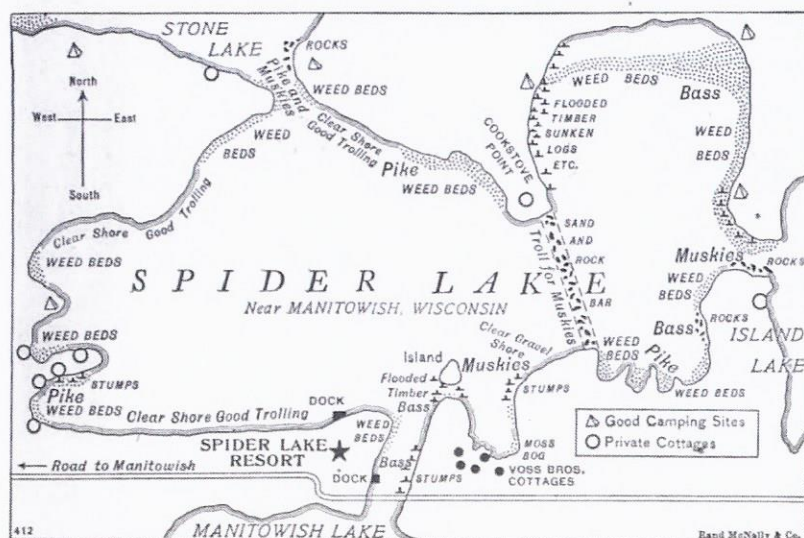
furnished complete for housekeeping during the summer season. If one contemplates a week-end trip to the Manitowish, the Rest Lake resort is advantageous in being closer to the railway station, to Rest Lake and the river below the dam, but if your idea is to spend several days in this wonderful outing country, Spider Lake is better. Most of us on an outing do not care to fish the same lake day after day, and as the remainder of the lakes in the chain are clustered around Spider Lake as a center, it, as a base, offers access to all the rest with the least amount of travel.

Spider Lake, as all the other lakes in the chain, is most conveniently reached from the town of Manitowish. It is about an hour's ride from the railway station—not that it takes an hour to drive an auto that far, in fact, I've been told that they often drive it in half an hour, but I find that by the time they've loaded your baggage, then driven to Rest Lake and unloaded one or two of your genial fellow outers, talked a bit and arranged to call for someone that evening and then driven on over to Spider Lake, which is about three miles further, and you start to appease the fiercest appetite for break-

fast you've had since the last time you visited the Great North Woods, it's all of an hour since the conductor called "Ma-a-a-n-ito-o-o"—(I have never been able to hear the conductor's "wish")—and the porter has said, "Yessah! Heah is where yo' get off at, sah! Yessah! Thank yo', sah! Hope I hab yo' on my next trip, sah." At that you can leave the office in Chicago at 5:00 p. m. and be out in the boat by 7:00 in the morning, whereas, if you tried to come in from the east side you'd be lucky if you got to the resort by 2:00 p. m. I tried it once, but only once. Everybody I know goes in from Manitowish. The resort people go to Manitowish for their mail—that's proof enough.

ANOTHER thing, as you travel up the chain you find the timber larger and the vista much more beautiful. Coming into Spider Lake by water (up the Manitowish River and through Stone Lake) the resort is strikingly picturesque, a cluster of log cottages artistically set on the high shore of a point overlooking the lake on the west side of the channel to Manitowish Lake. This point is really a peninsula between Spider and Mani-





towish lakes. Spider Lake seems to me to be considerably larger than the maps show. As near as I could learn it is about three and one-half miles long by two and one-half miles wide, and has, I believe, the most irregular shore line of any lake I have ever seen. In fact, it gains its name from the natives' fancy of the resemblance of its shape to that of a spider. In this lake there are a number of sandy shores backed by a thick forest of birch and larger trees. Just for luck once, in describing the shore line from a fishing standpoint, let us deal to the right, cutting across the channel that leads to Manitowish Lake. Crossing this channel just above the high road bridge, we will turn to the left (north). Here we have a rock and gravel shore, with a number of submerged logs, stumps, large boulders and fallen timber, an ideal place to cast for bass. Following along this shore a short way you will come to a small island and, between this island and the main shore, is quite an area of flooded timber which seems most always filled with hungry bass, whose code of ethics is to grab your bait the instant it hits the water and then run around a stump with it, tangle up the line and unhook themselves. But, as the guileless novice in the stock market, very often they miss their guess and another excellent bass goes to that bourne from which a good fish rarely returns, i. e., the live bag. It pays to work this, if they're biting, even at the risk of loss of tackle occasionally, as when you get 'em they're fine ones.

GOING around the island you will see a long, narrow bay shaped like a boot, called Voss Bros'. Bay, their cottages being along the south shore, and this bay is one of the best protected from the wind of any on the entire chain. The shores are high and clean, but heavily timbered. At the extreme lower end there is a moss bog, and while, of course, it is not fishing grounds it's worth looking at as a curiosity. This is where

the resort people and others in the vicinity get their moss for packing fish to ship. It grows in a tamarack swamp and runs from two to three feet thick (deep) and while gathering it, even in August, it is not uncommon to find frost at the roots. It is almost heat proof, consequently when fish are packed in it with ice they can be shipped most anywhere, and will arrive before the ice melts.

LEAVING this bay, along the east side, at the entrance you will see a half a dozen or so old snags. Along here is a good place to cast or troll for muskies—it is good grounds for big ones. Continuing on along the shore you will find it high, with a rock and coarse gravel bed. Shortly you will come to a point where you will find three small bays.

From this point running straight across the lake slightly west of north is a sand bar, I'll tell you about after a bit. Each of these bays is deep water with small weed beds, and they are considered one of the best pike grounds in the lake. Along the shores of the third bay, as you continue on northeast, there are a number of large boulders and around here the red-eye (small-mouth) bass are caught plentifully on most any bait, either live or artificial. A short distance further on you will strike a point with very shallow water, after rounding which you are in the channel leading into Island Lake, charmingly beautiful, and excellent fishing lake, and which I will describe fully in a later issue of OUTERS' BOOK-RECREATION. This channel is an excellent place to cast in the early morning before the boats begin to go through, and good-sized muskies are often caught trolling when going through to Island Lake. It is the custom of most everyone in the Manitowish chain to hang out some sort of a musky bait going anywhere any time. You can never tell from where you sit just how hungry some old musky may be, and many big ones have been caught this way.

After leaving this channel, continuing on north into the large bay, you will find, on the east shore, a number of small weed beds, and on the west shore flooded timber, sunken logs, stumps, etc., excellent grounds in which to troll or cast. The water is shallow over a thin vegetable growth, and in the early summer or late fall it is excellent for bass as they come up out of the deeper water to feed. The sunken and flooded timber on the west shore is on a coarse gravel bed with occasional boulders and, as the lake bed depresses very rapidly here, it makes quite deep water but a short distance from the shore. It is an excellent place



Washing the dishes—rub them with sand, rinse and wipe





*The penalty of being able to cook—you cook while the others fish*

to troll, but you will have to keep a sharp lookout to keep the boat and your tackle off the sunken logs. Shortly you will come to a very narrow and sandy point, called Cookstove Point, on which there is a small cottage amid a few virgin pines. From this point runs a rock and gravel bar straight across and a little east of south to the mainland at the first of the three bays. This bar is noted for its large muskies, usually caught by trolling. Following the shore of this point you will find the water is quite deep, but a few small weed beds can be seen. This is good pike grounds. Going on down the shore you will come to a very narrow, short channel. This is the entrance to Stone Lake. There are some weeds and it usually pays to troll through here, for quite a few nice muskies and pike have been caught.

**B**UT we will leave Stone Lake and the two lakes northeast of it, Mud Lake and Clear Lake, for description in a later issue. Continuing on around the shore you will find it much the same as the other clear shores of Spider Lake, sand and gravel bed with an occasional bunch of weeds. The west shore is very irregular, with two deep bays and some virgin timber in the background, but mostly second growth. Several secluded home-like cottages peep out from amid the verdure. Through much of the entire chain you will find shores where the second growth timber comes to the water's

edge, the shore line being very irregular and a mass of stumps, submerged limbs and brush over a sand-gravel bed, all of which is excellent cover for the fish.

**H**ERE on Spider Lake one may camp most anywhere, the same as on the other lakes in the chain. And one thing in particular let me say about its sandy shores—they were made particularly for dishwashing purposes. What do I mean? Doubtless most readers know, but if any do not, the finest way to wash dishes is to scour them with a handful of wet sand, rinse them in the lake and wipe them. It beats any kitchen sink, dishpan, hot water and soap, or any dishwashing machine that was ever invented. Two or three rubs with the clean, fine, wet sand will take the most stubborn grease off any of them, a rinse in the clear water of the lake takes off all the sand and there you are—wipe them and put them away.

Spider Lake is an excellent fishing lake and offers a little better opportunities for bass than some of the other lakes in the chain. It is rather a favorite haunt of the pike (the wall-eye or pike perch), but, as all the lakes in the Manitowish chain, it is principally the home of that fighting wolf of the waters, the muskelunge. But on one point let me caution you. In trolling or casting with an artificial bait you strike your fish instantly when you feel him hit the bait. If you are trolling he probably hooked himself

when he struck if you were going at a fairly good rate, and your striking can do no harm; if you are casting you will have to strike quick or he will have spit out the bait, but when fishing with a live bait for any fish don't be in a hurry to strike, and particularly with muskies. Bass, pike and muskies take a live bait from the back, kill it, by hitting it, then turn it and swallow it. A musky is proverbially lazy. It is nothing for them to fool around for half an hour—yes, sir, I mean a full thirty minutes, not half a minute—before swallowing the bait, and often have I struck a musky fifteen or twenty minutes after he had taken the bait, only to find the rear half of my bait torn to strings or nearly scaled by their sharp teeth, but no musky. After they strike, while they are killing the bait, they move around slowly, circling from place to place. During this time, in fact, instantly after you feel them strike, give them all the line they want. Follow them up with the boat if necessary. When they have swallowed the bait they will start off decisively in some definite direction. Then strike—they will invariably be well hooked, and then the fun begins. Bass act on practically the same principle.

**M**ANY a musky fisherman would be more successful if he followed the tactics of old Abe La Fave, who runs the resort on Island Lake. Abe fishes with a cane of pole, of course, with about fifteen to twenty feet of line, and live



IN THE WISCONSIN WONDERLAND



*On one of the thousands of shady trails in this enchanting region*