SYDNEY LAKE FISHING CHEAT SHEET

How to Catch Trophy Pike

Where the big ones go each month, how deep, what to throw and when to go, mid-May to September.

SIX TROPHY PIKE RULES

1. **Big pike like it cool.** Small pike stay in warm weeds. Big ones look for 61–70°F water and go deeper as the lake warms.
2. **Fish next to deep water.** Trophies sit where a shallow feeding spot drops fast into deep water, near the cisco.
3. **Slow when it's cold.** May and late September: slow down, long pauses. Summer: speed up and cover water.
4. **Wind and clouds help.** They pull big pike shallow. Bright and calm? Go deeper or fish dawn and dusk.
5. **Go bigger as summer goes on.** Pike eat fish up to a third of their length. By late summer, 6–10 in baits.
6. **Release gear out first.** Big net, long pliers and hook cutters within reach before you hook a giant.

MONTH BY MONTH

MONTH	WHERE TO LOOK	DEPTH	WHAT TO THROW	BEST TIME
Mid–late May Back-Bay Bruisers Water 45–55°F	Warm, dark, soft-bottom back bays and creek mouths with deep water close by. The downwind end of the bay.	**2–10 ft**	**Spoon** + single hook & grub, lift and flutter. Slug-Go or X-Rap with long pauses. **Dead smelt** on a quick-strike rig. **Slow.**	**Late morning to afternoon** once the sun warms the bays.
June Weeds and Wind Water 55–68°F	First green cabbage, rock points and narrows where bays meet the main lake (Centre Arm weed bay, Park Narrows, The Gap).	**6–15 ft**	**3½–4 in spoon**, slow flutter. #5 Mepps or bucktail over the weeds. Jerkbaits. Calm: 5–6 in swimbait.	**Cloudy, windy days.** Best just before a cold front.
July Big Fish Move Out Water 68–75°F	**Fast breaks** into deep water, deep weed edges, windy main-lake points, narrows with current.	**15–25 ft**	**3/4–1 oz jig + 6 in paddletail**: rip, pause, fall. Troll deep cranks at 2.5–4 mph. Weedless Silver Minnow.	**Early and late** on calm days. Wind and clouds bring them up.
August Cool Water, Big Baits Water 68–73°F	Main-lake humps, reefs and deep rock points next to the deep basin. Some suspend with the cisco.	**18–35 ft**	**Big spoon**: cast, let it hit bottom, reel fast. 6–8 in swimbait on a 3/4–2 oz jig. Troll deep divers.	**Morning and evening.** Bright days: 30 ft and deeper.
September The Big Ones Come Back Water 55–64°F	The biggest reefs and rock points near deep water, current, bay exits, green cabbage edges (The Gap, Mini Gap).	**10–20 ft**	**Troll big cranks** 12–18 ft deep at 3–4 mph. 6–10 in swimbait, slow. #14 X-Rap or gold spinnerbait.	**Overcast days, falling barometer.** Heaviest pike of the season.

TACKLE BOX

- 7–7½ ft heavy casting rod, 50–65 lb braid
- 12–18 in leader, 80–100 lb fluoro or wire. **Every cast**
- Spoons: Dardevle, Williams Whitefish, Len Thompson
- #4–5 Mepps or Blue Fox, bucktails, spinnerbaits
- Slug-Go, X-Rap, 6–10 in paddletails, deep cranks
- Gold, silver, white; firetiger in Kilburn's dark water

QUICK TIPS

- **Only catching little ones?** Wrong spot. Go deeper, find cooler water.
- **Mammoth magnets:** deep water right beside a shallow feeding spot, with wind on it.
- **Find the cisco, find the pike** in August. Rent a Garmin.
- **Fishing lakers in September?** Keep a leader on.
- **Pike hunt by day.** Dawn, dusk and cloudy days are best.

KEEP & RELEASE

- Keep 2 pike a day, 27 in or under
- 38 in or longer? Register it in Ontario's Trophy Waters at camp (witness + photo), then release it
- Unhook in the net, in the water
- Hold level, hand under the belly, about 10 seconds out
- Single barbless hooks. **No jaw spreaders**

Full guide: sydneylake.com/how-to-catch-northern-pike
Sydney Lake Wilderness Lodge · fly-in fishing 30 minutes north of Kenora, Ontario
Questions? Call **1-800-437-9937** or text Jeb **1-780-660-7171**

Tips from the dock, written by Jeb Fahlgren
sydneylake.com