

Barlow Lake: Interesting Facts and Figures

A publication of the Barlow Lake Association

Barlow Lake was first mapped by the Michigan Department of Conservation Institute for Fisheries Research in 1951. The original mapping was conducted through the ice with weighted drop lines. This was a slow and laborious process and took many days to complete.

The lake bottom was remapped again in 2016 using Sonar and hydro-acoustic mapping software. The entire lake was mapped in a single day. In terms of water depths, the new map was remarkably similar to the 1951 map.

Barlow Lake has a surface area of 185 acres. Of Michigan's 10,031 lakes 5 acres or greater in area, Barlow Lake ranks 647th.

Barlow Lake has a maximum depth of 64 feet and a mean or average depth of 21 feet.

The lake has a volume of 3,883 acre-feet which equates to 1.3 billion gallons of water.

Barlow Lake has a shoreline length of 4 miles and a shoreline development factor of 2.1. Shoreline development factor is a measure of the irregularity of the shoreline. A perfectly round lake would have a shoreline development factor of 1.0. With a shoreline development factor of 2.1, the shoreline of Barlow Lake is over two times longer than if the lake was perfectly round.

Barlow Lake is 768 feet above sea level. Water exits Barlow Lake and flows south over the dam at Bowens Mill to Payne Lake into Gun Lake to the Rabbit River and on to the Kalamazoo River and Lake Michigan. The elevation difference between Barlow Lake and Lake Michigan is about 189 feet.

Historical water quality sampling results indicate that Barlow Lake, on a scale of 0 to 100 with 0 being excellent water quality and 100 being poor, is 38 indicating good to excellent water quality.

Barlow Lake is one of only a handful of inland lakes in Michigan that supports cisco. Cisco are a coldwater fish species that require well-oxygenated waters to survive. The presence of cisco in Barlow Lake is a testament to the lake's excellent water quality.

To protect inland lakes from nutrient pollution, Michigan enacted a law in 2012 that prohibits the application of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus unless a new lawn is being established (and phosphorus is needed to promote root growth), or if a soil test indicates a phosphorus deficiency. If you apply lawn fertilizer near the lake, be sure to use a phosphorus-free fertilizer. The middle number on the fertilizer bag (12-0-8) will be zero.

In a recent assessment of the nation's lakes, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that lakes lacking natural shorelands were three times more likely to be in poor biological condition. Preserving and restoring natural shoreline areas is one of the most important things you can do to protect water quality.

To find out more about Michigan lakes and what you can do to protect them, visit www.michiganlakeinfo.com.

