

103-90-10140-0040

Finger Lake (Upper Sarkar)

Finger Lake, 55° 57' N lat. 133° 6' W long., is located in the Sarkar Lake complex on the northwest coast of Prince of Wales Island (Figure 9). Finger Lake is approximately 118 km (74 miles) from Ketchikan or 75 km (47 miles) west of Wrangell. Finger Lake is a large lake with many small bays, fingers, and islands. Finger Lake is 4.8 km (3 miles) long and 1.6 km (1 mile) at its widest point. Its maximum depth has been recorded to be 56 meters (183 feet). Finger lake lies at an elevation of 3.8 meters (12.5 feet) above sea level (Figure 10).

Finger Lake is almost always accessible by float plane. There are no trails, shelters, or cabins. The shoreline is heavily timbered with cedar, spruce, and hemlock, and the ground is generally quite wet. Camp sites are available, but require a bit of looking to find. The best shore for camping appears to be the east shore or on one of the many small islands.

Finger Lake was visited on May 15 and 16, 1984. Two floating gillnets (Figures 11 and 12) were set. One was set off a small island near the outlet and the other was set near the northeast end. The nets were fished for a total of 20 hours each. A total of 51 cutthroat, 2 Dolly Varden, 10 coho salmon smolt, and 1 cottid were captured. The cutthroat ranged in size from 200 mm (7.9 inches) to 300 mm (11.8 inches). The age-length relationships of the cutthroat and Dolly Varden sampled can be found in Tables 8 and 9.

The cutthroat and Dolly Varden sampled from Finger Lake were examined for sexual maturity. It was noted that 24% of the cutthroat sampled were mature fish (Table 10). The Dolly Varden sample of only two fish was not large enough to be considered a representative sample.

Six inlets feed into Finger Lake. These are located for the most part in the north end, however, they are found around much of the shoreline. None of these inlets are very large, however, in total they do provide ample areas of suitable spawning ground.

The outlet of Finger Lake is shallow, swift, and composed of bedrock, cobbles, and some areas of gravel. There are only a few spots that look inviting for sport fishing. The next lake in the complex is approximately 2 km (1.25 miles) downstream. Excellent trout fishing is reported to be available where the stream enters this small lake.

Finger Lake is a most pleasant body of water. The many small islands, fingers, and bays provide a wide variety of sport angling possibilities. Finger Lake is one of the best lakes in southern Southeast Alaska as far as aesthetic qualities for anglers. The interest and use of Finger Lake will vary with the season, depending upon the presence of salmon. Trout numbers will also vary seasonally, with the peak abundance occurring in fall and again in the spring.

The limiting factor to the development of Finger Lake is its rather long flying distance from major population centers. Timber harvest has started in the Sarkar Lake complex and it will be only a matter of time until Finger Lake is impacted to some extent. This development will have the positive effect of providing road access from the Prince of Wales Island road system.