



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 4

#246

FOUNDED 1991

April 2015

**PRESIDENT:** Denny Coulardot

**(260 ) 691-3118**

**SECRETARY:** Ted Walter

**(260 ) 668-0216**

**EDUCATION DIRECTOR:** John Bales

**(260 ) 854-3921**

The last meeting was held March 9, 2015 at the Kendallville Public Library with 12 members present. Springtime may finally have arrived! Denny reported that it may be a long time before the ice on his lake disappears since he measured 19 inches recently. However, since the last meeting temperatures and windy conditions should have removed ice from all the area lakes. The last lake in my area to loose its ice is Clear Lake and Mike Zaborny fished it March 28th. There was ice present, but he was able to break through and fish most of the lake. The ice is completely gone now. David Gould had photos of a recent trip to Lake Erie where he caught some extra nice walleyes. Also, Mike Tokar and Shawn Nicodemus reported good catches of walleye on Pretty Lake recently. (all these were through the ice, by the way).

It was also reported that there were some nice messes of crappie being taken.

As you know, Springtime can bring on the most unstable fishing conditions of the season. T-shirts one day, snowmobile suits the next. An approaching cold front is always on the weather forecast. Water temperatures are slow to warm due to cold overnight temps. In northern Indiana, frost is a possibility through the end of May.

And so, we need to be more flexible at this time of year than during the more stable summer season.

I can't put it better than Mr. Perry:

**BUCK SEZ:** *"A fish is a creature who can adjust, or adapt, to his environment. He can adjust or adapt to changes in temperature, pressure, light, oxygen, food—you name it. None of these "changed" conditions will cause him any great discomfort. However, the adjustments are not done instantly, it takes a little time. Some fish appear to adjust faster than others, and*

*some seem to be more sensitive to a change. This would explain "stragglers" as well as some species appearing sooner than others after a cold front. If any discomfort comes, it is when an "unstable" (constantly changing) condition occurs in his environment, and this he won't tolerate if he can get out of it. A cold-blooded fish doesn't know, nor care for that matter, that his body must adapt to a temperature change, but instinct tells him it better take place or else. I like to think he would go nuts if he had to try adjusting to things changing all the time. He would certainly seek and stay in a place where things are more stable.*

*Temperature changes in the water aren't too fast overall, but it's "changing" more, faster, and to a greater degree, in the shallows than in the deep. Shallow water may become rather stable at periods of the year (thank goodness!) but overall, the "stable" conditions are in deeper water.*

*As some of you know, "light" is one of our major guides to the movement of the fish. What is more unstable than light in the life of a fish? Sure he can adjust, in fact he has a couple ways for doing it, but it takes a little time. It is said it takes quite a few more minutes for a fish to adjust to light in one direction, than it does to adjust in the other (light to dark, or dark to light). Our eyes adjust to the changes in light rather fast, but suppose they didn't and the light kept changing? It takes little imagination to see where the light is more stable in a body of water.*

*If you were to ask me where the fish are at any particular time in a body of water, about the only answer I could give would be to say, "where conditions are more stable." The only reliable escape that a fish has from a "changing" environment in DEEP WATER. The deeper it is, the more stable it becomes."*

At this time, longer lines lengths, (see John's article) smaller, shallower lakes, darker bottoms that warm faster, back bays, you know the routine.

**NEXT MEETING:** April 13, 2015 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.

**" KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS "**

## River Systems

About the only thing we can do about the weather and water conditions is to hope they will be good on the days we plan to fish. Many Spoonpluggers have a choice of waters they can fish and if you live in an area where you can get to a river, you MAY have a leg up on the rest of the fishermen when it comes to cold-front conditions. I say "MAY", because rivers often present challenges not experienced in other bodies of water.

First let's understand why rivers can partially offset the negative effects of a cold-front condition. During cold-front conditions, the water becomes unstable from the top down in most bodies of water. The surface of the water becomes colder than underlying water and so the cold, dense water begins to sink to the depth where the water temperature is equal to the sinking water's temperature. The water is then said to be stable. Under these adverse conditions, the fish will move deeper until stable conditions are reached. If we are to make a catch of adult fish under these conditions, we will most likely need to fish at or below the depth where conditions are stable for the fish. Severe cold front conditions may send fish to a depth that is nearly impossible to fish with a trolled lure or if not enough depth is available for stability, the fish may become so dormant that they are nearly impossible to catch. Current can partially offset cold front conditions.

In a river where moderate to heavy current is present, the water can get constantly mixed to the extent that the effects of the sinking, colder water is lessened to a certain extent. So, we should all head for a river during a cold-front condition, right? The answer is a definite "maybe".

There are challenges to consider. First of all we must consider the issue of safety. If we run out of fuel or experience a dead battery on a lake we are not too worried. If our engine fails for some reason on a river with a heavy current, it is entirely possible to be a considerable ways from the boat launch before we get help. Lesson: When fishing such waters, take extra precautions concerning fuel, battery strength, cell phone, warm clothes, wearing of life jackets, etc.

The next issue is the water conditions. Rivers can experience changes in water conditions in ways other bodies of water may not. Runoff after a storm can turn a river into something resembling chocolate milk. While this water condition may APPEAR to be a good thing (dark or stained water), the fish may react negatively because of the rapidly changing water conditions. Fish can adapt to changing conditions, but the change must be gradual, otherwise they develop lockjaw.....no matter the condition or body of water.

Fishing in current requires a some practice. It would not be the recommended place for a beginning Spoon-plugger to learn the mechanics. Fishing upstream can require many more layers of line than fishing downstream as well as compensating for current speed in order to maintain proper lure presentation. And we must learn to do both efficiently to be successful. Complicating things even more, the current speed can change daily or even by the hour, therefore beginners would be advised to learn proper presentation of lures on lakes or reservoirs prior to tackling a river.

Fish relate to structure in the same manner regardless of the body of water. The fish are never lost. Breaks and breaklines are equally important regardless of the body of water. In a river, a current breakline may be an important factor. Even though fish are constantly swimming, they have a need to get out of the current from time to time to "rest". The obvious places are the deeper holes. Especially the heads of the holes. These are the key areas just as in other bodies of water. But other current breaks also exist and they are worth searching for. Water flows in a straight line until something hard causes it to turn such as a hard natural point, the down river side of rocks or boulders or manmade object such as a bridge pylons, etc. Where a current break or change occurs in the direction of the water flow a current break exists somewhere. It may vary in size from very small to very large, but anytime a change in direction occurs, the water is flowing faster in one area and slower in another. When a movement occurs, the fish may move away from the current break just as they may move from the more stable conditions of deeper water in a lake or reservoir.

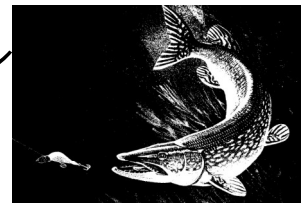
Although rivers may be challenging, they can teach us many things about the makeup of structure situations in lakes and reservoirs and offer valuable insights about how they may have formed.

**"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS "**



# *Good Spoonplugging*

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



One of our guidelines when trolling Spoonplugs is that when we hit a fish, we should immediately stop, anchor down, and cast. Most all of the great catches of all times including our own, were caught on the cast after locating the fish on the troll. However, there are times that our depth and speed control on the cast cannot be duplicated, even by repositioning the boat and checking out all of the type lures. Once I have exhausted every option of depth and speed when going to the cast, only then will I get back to the troll.

There are days where the fish can only be caught on the troll. Lucky for us that we have that type of control in our hip pocket. I am not good enough to have an exact explanation as to why this is so but I would guess that it can only be a weather or water condition. If we try to make any other explanation, we would not come close to the answer.

I experienced this exact fishing situation this past weekend on a lake with good water color and no weeds. The bass were positioned off the end of a bar that was formed by a creek entering the lake and were all along the side of the bar to the inside turn and we continued to catch them in that area until the next turn out on the breakline. After not getting a single fish on the cast, we continued to troll for the rest of the time that the fish were active. We had hits on every pass for over two hours. Most of the fish were 10-12 feet deep. We used 250's with a long line at ten feet and caught a few more moving out to 12 feet and used a 200. For the early season and when using the smaller lures, I always use 12lb No-Bo. For those of you who have given up using No-Bo for braid, you are making a big mistake. In the early season you want to use the long lines and this is why we will never be without No-Bo. I cannot express how important exact line lengths and lure sizes to get the lures used to barely make contact with the mucky bottoms without being fouled all the time. If we did not take the time to let out the exact line length every time, we did not catch a fish.

We got there at 8:30 in the morning and the fish did not move till 2:30. It would have been easy to be headed home because of the slow fishing but we chose to stick it out. There were a few good lessons on this day: The value of the troll and how important it is to have exact depth and speed control and to exercise patience for the fish to move. It would have been difficult to know what time the fish became active if we were on our way home at 2:00!

*Good Spoonplugging*  
*John Bales*

**"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"**



**The more I learn, the more I see  
there is to learn.” E. L. “Buck” Perry**

### **BUCK SEZ:**

You might ask; “How much TIME should I spend on a structure before leaving it?”

The question cannot be answered with a flat statement of so many minutes or hours. The situation that exists would determine just how much time should be spent. The nearest thing to a flat statement would be —”As long as necessary to be sure the structure is thoroughly worked at all depths and speeds. Then periodically return to the structure and work it again to see if any migration has occurred.”

As you approach this question, you must bear in mind the very important fact—fish do not move constantly nor consistently.

In checking a structure by **trolling**, enough time must be spent to allow enough passes to cover all sections. The size of the structure will determine the time needed for the job. A small straight bar would certainly require less time than a long bar that might veer in another direction at the end. Other type structures such as humps, deltas, roadbeds, channels breaklines, etc., would require a different time period.

In casting, as stated before, a half dozen casts should cover the shallow water. When casting deep sections, five or six casts with a walking lure, then the same with a jump-type should cover the area for one boat position.

Another factor that would determine how long a particular structure is worked is the size of the body of water and just how many potentially productive structures, while others may have only one. If a number of structures exist, then each should be checked to determine which has the best potential. A more thorough check of the better ones, or one, should then be made. If only one is available then all efforts would be concentrated here.

If good, productive structure is being worked from a boat without a motor, then most likely you should spend your time here. Without a motor, it is difficult to move around fast enough to find another structure.

When weather conditions indicate there will be no mass movement of fish, it’s a good idea to concentrate on a structure known to be productive. Under these conditions, movements are short and you has better be in position when it occurs. It could be over while you are between structures.

If fishing pressure is heavy, many structures would already be occupied. If you have a good one it might be a good idea to stay with it, or someone else would take it over while you’re gone, and a lot of valuable fishing time will be lost in trying to find another.

Each situation and each structure will determine the amount of time to be spent. The main thing is to spend enough time to be confident you know it thoroughly and that no movement has occurred.

The things I have just said, concerning the time spent on a particular structure, and especially the part about **which structure to concentrate upon**; reads fairly easy. BUT, when you get on the water, you may find you don’t have a ready answer. I have solved any doubt that might occur, by going back to the ‘basic movement’, and recall—”when the movement period occurs, **ALL** the fish move. Some may move to a greater degree than others, but they all move.”

What this means to you, if the fish are not moving on the structure you’re working, they are not likely to be moving on another. So—you pick out the best one, and stick with it.

**“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”**