



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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The last meeting was held January 2, 2015 at the Kendallville Public Library with 16 members present.

Since the Library was closed due to winter weather conditions, no February meeting took place.

I've been told by several people who have been ice fishing that our area lakes have 16-18 inches of ice. Also that fishing hasn't been that great during the last month...if you've been brave enough to withstand that bitter cold.

Since there's nothing else to report, let me tell you a couple of stories about Alaska:

Here in Fremont, (population 1,200 counting dogs and cats) everyone know everyone and many meet each Wednesday night at the American Legion for beers and a 50/50 drawing. We have two brothers in their 70's who have run a fishing/hunting camp north of Valdez, Alaska for over 30 years. They come back to Indiana to get away from the cold and snow.

I asked them how that was workin' out for them?

They admitted it's been uncomfortably cold and snowy here that past couple of years, but they prefer it to spending the winter at their camp. They said they stayed the winter once about 25 years ago. They have a 2-story cabin. It snowed so hard, they couldn't even get out of the upstairs window...and they said there was really nothing to get out TO even if they dug their way out. They didn't leave the cabin for 66 days. Fortunately they had stockpiled plenty of wood and vitals. They vowed to never again attempt to spend the winter there.

I have cousins that live in Alaska , one since the 1950's and the other since 1995. The first cousin

lives in Fairbanks and the other in Central (that's the town-population 134), about 120 miles north of Fairbanks.

The one who lives in Fairbanks told of getting in his van one winter morning when it was over 50 below to go to work and when he slammed the door shut on his van, all 4 tires shattered.

The cousin who lives in Central recently sent a photo of his thermometer which had bottomed out at 60 below.

I asked them when they visited here last summer how they withstood such cold conditions and they said the cold isn't the issue. Everyone is prepared for the cold and dresses accordingly. The winter darkness is the most challenging aspect of living there. Many people suffer from winter depression. Then there is the summertime inconvenience of trying to sleep at night when the sun doesn't go down until very late at "night".

Okay, that's my Alaska stories so that we don't feel so bad about OUR weather. Next month I may have something more pertinent to Spoonplugging to report!!

**Don't forget about the Illinois Spoonpluggers Winter Seminar March 21, 2015 at the Elk Grove Public Library, 1001 Wellington Ave., Elk Grove, Illinois. 9:00 AM to 4:00 P.M.**

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**NEXT MEETING: March 9, 2015 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.**

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

*I haven't put this in a newsletter in a while and I try to include it each year so this is a re-run of a piece from an old newsletter. This is a 10 minute winter project to have made up (and probably improved upon) that could save you a lot of time, pain, and perhaps an emergency room bill:*

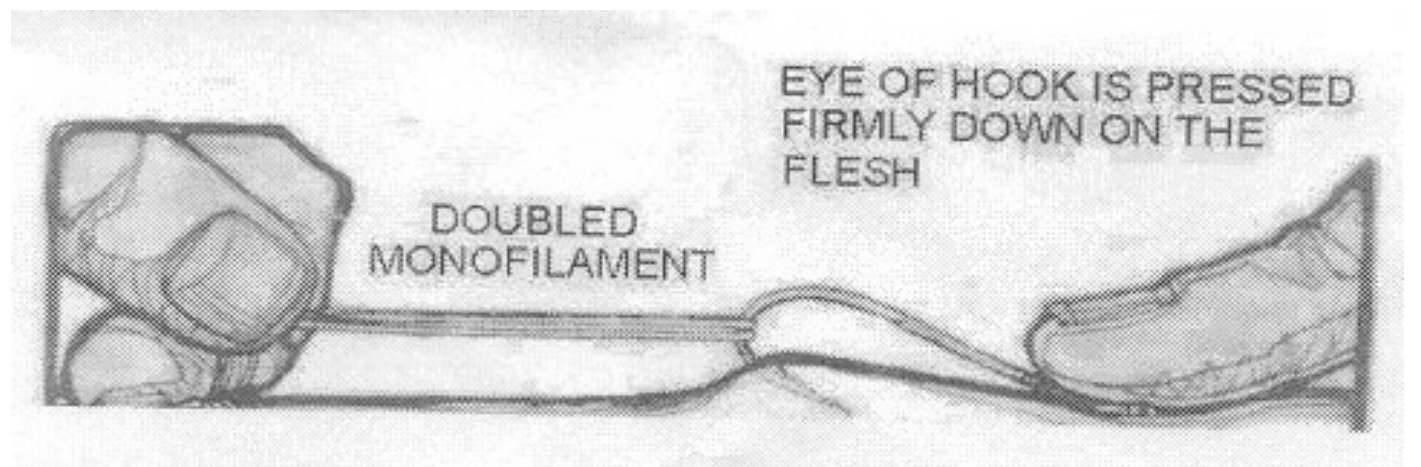
Sooner or later nearly every fisherman becomes a victim of his own or a fishing partner's hook. A fishing trip can be ruined by a wild cast and most methods I've heard concerning hook removal don't sound that feasible. Like poking the hook on through and cutting off the barb, etc. Might want to carry a bullet to bite on if you try that one.

But, according to several sources within our own club, this is a method that works in a lot of cases. It is in most instances nearly painless, and has actually been taught in a lot of emergency rooms around the country.

All you need is a piece of strong cord (No-Bo will work fine but cordage may be even better). Loop the line or cord around the embedded hook. Then press down the eye-end of the hook (for treble hooks it's best to cut off the exposed hooks to make that end as long and easy to press on as possible...and to prevent yet another injury when the hook comes out...which means you should also carry a pair of GOOD high-leverage diagonal cutters that are capable of easily cutting through your stoutest hooks) Pressing downward on the eye-end should make the embedded hook arch upward. Ouch! I know..it hurts, but this is essential. If you're working with a buddy, that part would be a good job for him. This leaves you with both hands to do the next step which is to give the line or cord a good, sharp, crisp YANK. The hook pops out almost painlessly because the barb is prevented from grabbing meat as it exits. It's actually rolling out at an angle that keeps the barb from grabbing onto anything! I've used this method once on Duane Grate and it worked splendidly as it has for several others in our club.

It should be noted that while this method works in many instances, it won't work in each and every case. A hook embedded in the face, for instance, may require a professional touch. As your mother used to say: "You could put an eye out!"

So as a quick and simple project, rig up a cord or line with finger loops for ease of use, a little anti-septic, a couple of band aids, put it all in a zip-lock bag to tuck in your tackle box and you'll be all set for when the inevitable happens.

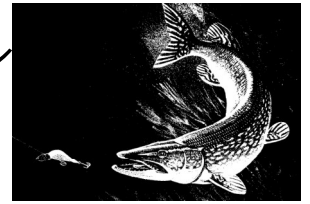


**"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS "**



# *Good Spoonplugging*

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



In a few weeks, the ice will be off and it will be time to figure out which lake to hit. In our area, we could go in about any direction and within an hour be sitting at one of 50 lakes within that time range. How does a Spoonplugger decide which lake he wants to tackle on any particular day, or on a seasonal basis? In the very early season, we would want to pick the smaller, shallower lakes with better water color because they will warm first and this will spark fish activity sooner than the larger, deeper, clear lakes. Whatever pattern you have happening on the shallow lakes, you can continue to stay with that pattern by switching over to a deeper lake a week or two later and that can go for the whole season and for many of the species.

In the early season, there are a couple of species that are much easier to find and catch and they are the crappie and walleye. The walleye spawn very early and can be found very shallow with water temperatures in the low to mid 40's. Within two weeks of ice out, the crappie can make good movements into the shallows and you can bet that I will be one of the guys taking advantage of that. Live bait at times is better early but once they start taking the light jigs under a bobber or just cast out and reeled, the live bait can go. The crappie is one of my favorite tasting fish and I spend at least a couple of weekends on them. And again, you can stay on them much longer by starting out on the smaller lakes and then hitting the deeper lakes.

Some would be amazed at how early in the season that a fish can be caught on the troll, especially the musky. We may think that because the water temps are in the low 40's, that catching a fish on the troll would be a low percentage way to fish. We have caught the bass in 42 degree water at trolling speeds in excess of 3 mph. The best thing that we can do is be ready to cast and troll no matter what the season or conditions we might face. One of the worst mind sets we can have is trying to tell a fish where he has to be on any particular day and what it will take to catch him. It doesn't hurt to try to predict what the fish will do, but we never really know for sure unless we check it out for ourselves. Only then do we know for sure.

Once summer gets here, there are more choices a fisherman can make, not only which lake or species, but there may be a certain technique that you may want to work on or get better at where a certain lake may be chosen over another.

Let's say that someone introduced you to drop shot fishing and you wanted to spend some time doing it on your own. What if you want to spend the whole day trolling for northern pike. You would certainly pick one with a good population or maybe the one with less fish but a few really big ones.

What if we have just had a massive cold front and the wind is going to blow at 30 mph and you have already made your mind up that you are still going fishing, regardless the conditions. Lake Erie is out, maybe Wawasee is out but maybe Dewart Lake will be the one. Wind can make fishing easy or difficult.

Mr. Perry taught us that water color should be considered in our fishing. We are certainly not blessed with those dark yellow green lakes these days but you should certainly consider water color to be one of the most important observations that we can make in our fishing. If you find one, you had better check it out.

These are just a few thoughts that should enter your mind when choosing a lake to fish. There are many more.

*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:**

### MAPPING AND INTERPRETATION

Most important of all in the mapping and fishing process is for the Spoonplugger to RE-CORD what he finds.

The drawings and markings on your first structure map may not be complete and in correct detail. You may find that there will be slight changes to be made on every trip. These changes may be something you missed, such as a small detail or break, or it could be a depth factor. Even a slight direction and distance change will have to be made. This will call for an additional change in your trolling and casting patterns, and your shoreline sightings will possibly be altered.

A proper record of structure will not only tell you where it's located and what some of its particular features are, but most important is that in making this record you increased your knowledge about proper interpretation. This is the important factor in your fishing know-how and growth. **THIS IS THE TEACHER THAT YOU CARRY WITH YOU.**

You may ask, “Do I have to have **exact** depths, distances, and scale when preparing structure maps?”

The answer is NO.

The important thing in mapping and recording the findings, is to show LOCATION, SHAPE AND DETAILS. Having **exact** depths, or **exact** measurements in feet, of the different dimensions of a structure is not necessary. It is not likely you would gain any knowledge, or that it would help you present lures correctly, if you had exact measurements.

If exact measurements are desired, there are several methods which could be used to get them; the use of contour maps prepared by engineers, depth sounders to secure depth readings, and even a tape to measure the distances.

Having everything to exact scale isn't important. In preparing your detailed structure maps, you would be using a certain section of the shoreline as a reference point. You would be using a certain object on the shoreline as a reference in determining location of the structure. With very little effort you will relate these things and a satisfactory SCALE will fall into place.

After all, the purpose of the map is to allow YOU to know where it is, how it is shaped, how far out it runs, how trolling passes are to be made, what size lures to use to reach certain sections, and where to position the boat for casting, etc. What do you care if your map does not give a true picture of actual measurements.

The same thing applies in your shoreline sightings for locating certain areas on structure, trolling paths, or casting positions.

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