

# Knowledge Is The Key To Fishing Success



by BUCK PERRY

## Part IV

Several months ago, when the Editor of Fishing Facts requested some articles on fishing man-made reservoirs, the question arose, "Where do we start?"

We started with an explanation of the word "Spoonplugging" . . . What makes a fish tick, and how do I catch him. Because that was four months ago and sometimes our memories play tricks on us, plus the fact that thousands of new readers are seeing Fishing Facts for the first time each month, I think it desirable to repeat that explanation.

SPOONPLUGGING is an all-inclusive word. It is *the total concept for successful fishing.*

(1). It is an understanding of *how* fish live, his habits, his instincts, his reaction to stimuli, *how* weather and water conditions affect him, *where* he is likely to be found under various conditions, and *what it takes* to put

him on the stringer at that particular time.

(2). It is an *orderly and precise manner* in which to fish.

(3). It is *confidence* in one's fishing; the removal of fear in fishing strange waters and for strange species.

(4). It is the full understanding that there is no magic short cut to success; and that *successful fishing is predicated on knowledge and the implementation of this knowledge.*

(5). It is the willingness to put forth *effort.*

(6). It requires no special talent or ability to learn, only a strong *desire* to catch fish.

(7). *The guy who understands* fish behavior and how to go about utilizing his knowledge to put fish on the stringer, we call a SPOON-PLUGGER.

(8). A SPOONPLUGGER has an unselfish attitude toward his fellow fisherman, directs his efforts toward conservation, and is concerned with his outdoor manners.

(9). Equipment that was designed for better control, and allows the trans-

*This fisherman is taking off in a fog. But then, most fishermen do all their fishing in a fog, the fog of ignorance.*

*The early morning fog on the water is soon burned away by the hot rays of the sun, but the fog of fishing ignorance is not so easily dispelled. All too often it persists for the entire lifetime of the individual fisherman. In some cases, the fog lifts partially and some fishermen progress to the point of gaining some knowledge and experiencing some success, but they stop there. For many, fishing is a matter of practicing the same mistakes for years.*

*Buck Perry has been called lunatic, genius, crank, expert, eccentric, foolish and profound. He prefers the title of TEACHER. For some thirty years now he has been TEACHING fishermen (who are willing to learn) how to catch more big fish than they ever thought possible. Most fishermen, however, refuse to believe the truth about fishing even when confronted with it. How about you?*

*Buck Perry and five whopper-sized bass. Taken from some wilderness retreat, some virgin waters? No way! Buck specializes in taking fish like these from lakes close to big cities, lakes that are called "fished out".*



*Our Contributing Editor Carl Malz, of Skokie, Illinois, and a "keeper" northern pike caught on a lake very close to Milwaukee. It was part of a demonstration project for one of Buck Perry's Fishing Schools which was given in the Milwaukee area during June and July this year. (Sixteen members of the Fishing Facts staff paid \$50 each to attend this school!)*



fer of fishing knowledge to others as easily as possible, is called SPOON-PLUGGING EQUIPMENT.

(10). Lures which were designed to allow SPOONPLUGGING knowledge to be utilized to full advantage are called SPOONPLUGS. These lures, through proper application, will be the means by which a fisherman can discipline himself, and constantly direct his attention to *the important controls* in fishing (depth and speed), rather than on aids (size, color and action).

We also discussed the words and terms used. This would allow us to understand each other when discussing lakes; their makeup, conditions, etc.

It was suggested that readers secure the basic Spoonplugging Booklets. These booklets cover the basic movement of fish, the basic weather and water conditions, and the basic presentation of lures.

With this basic knowledge in mind, we could then proceed to the big task of learning more about reservoirs.

Subsequently we covered some basic structures and covered or worked them fully both casting and trolling.

Before we proceed too much further, we should clear up a few more facts. If this is not done, I feel that much of what we talk about in the future will FALL ON DEAF EARS.

One of the reasons SPOONPLUGGING was created was due to the fact that, while still a very young fisherman, I noted that a multitude of opinions existed on what made fish tick and how to go about catching them. Many reasons were advanced for whatever success was had, but I found there was no scientific background to substantiate the reasons. It became obvious that very few true facts were known about fish, nor the best way to consistently catch them. All of the opinions given seemed to be just repeats of things heard or read about.

At an early age, I vowed that if ever I found out anything about fish; that if I ever talked or wrote about fishing, it would be from one definite approach — I WOULD NOT QUOTE FROM A FISHING LIBRARY, NOR WOULD I EVER PUT DOWN AS FACT ANYTHING THAT I HAD NOT FOUND OUT FOR MYSELF, NOR EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TIMES TO BE JUDGED AS FACT.

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My associates, friends, and those who have followed my fishing and teachings can vouch for the fact that the observations and conclusions I have made are mine alone, and are not the writings or observations of someone else. For many years I have refrained from reading outdoor magazines or books on the subject of fishing, until Fishing Facts came along.

By stating the above, I do not mean that I have not had some help from friends and fellow fishermen. Many have worked with me in arriving at a final conclusion. Many hours have been spent in discussions on the merits of an observation or working on a problem. Through the years, I have repeatedly compared notes with great fishermen like Don Nichols of LaGrange, Illinois. He has been a great help in the formation of my opinions on weather, and what part it played in fishing. He has helped me many times in adding to my knowledge by presenting problems to be solved, and helping me to solve them. There are others, such as Terry O'Malley of Chicago, who have given of their time in tying down a particular subject. But, in no case have I expressed the opinions of others, nor drawn a conclusion unless I had experienced it, tested it fully, or until I was completely sure in my own mind that it was sound.

During a fishing season, many fine catches of fish are made in all parts of the country. Many of these catches are made by fishermen with little or no fishing experience. Many are made by fishermen who have been fishing for many years. One thing each catch has in common is the fact that the fishermen were at the right place, at the right time, and fishing in the right way.

The question that comes to mind about these catches is just *how of-*

*ten* will these fishermen be at the right place, at the right time, and be doing their fishing in such a way as to *repeat* the good catch?

Another thing to consider, were these fishermen aware of *why* they happened to be at that particular place, at that particular time, and were they aware as to *why* they were fishing in *that* particular way at the time?

We are sure that *some* of these fishermen were aware, or had the knowledge, as to why they were there and doing the things they were doing. We are also certain that most of these catches were made because the fishermen "just happened" to be there, and "just happened" to be fishing correctly at the time.

Our observations, over the years, have been that most catches "just happen" to be made.

In our present day, recreation means a great deal to us. We, who have chosen fishing as our outdoor recreation, should get as much enjoyment out of it as possible. We go fishing to catch fish. There are side benefits of course, but will side benefits satisfy our needs? We have seen very few golfers who enjoy the sport for the side benefits only. He gets his satisfaction from becoming good at the game, and being able to lower his score as he goes along. He will buy the necessary tools. He will pay for instruction. And he will work hard at becoming good. He seeks, and gets all of the knowledge he can about his chosen recreation.

What about the fisherman?

The secret to consistent successful fishing is KNOWLEDGE of the sport. I feel the fishermen should, at least, have knowledge of the following:

1. A knowledge of fish. Their pattern of behavior, how they react to stimuli.



*Terry O'Malley of Chicago is one of Buck Perry's top assistants, and one of the greatest fisherman to be found anywhere. Catches like these are so commonplace for Terry that we have to beg him to take pictures of them for us. This limit catch came from a Wisconsin lake near Chicago, a lake that has been "written off" by nearly all fishermen, because they don't know how to catch fish out of it!*

*That's Buck Perry second from the left, then Contributing Editor Carl Malz of Skokie, Illinois, then Gene Strang of Chicago and Terry O'Malley also of Chicago, and a member of Buck's staff. The catch was made as part of another demonstration for Chicago and Milwaukee area Fishing Schools taught by Buck Perry and Terry O'Malley. The lake? We won't tell you because someone would be awfully embarrassed. (The lake is scheduled to be poisoned out because it has no more game fish!)*



2. A knowledge of the water to be fished. Bottom conditions that fish adapt to, mapping and interpretation.
3. A knowledge of conditions that affect fish, weather and water.
4. A knowledge of how to locate fish, casting and trolling.

It was many years ago that I began to realize that *there had to be a better way to fish*. I witnessed fishing in almost virgin waters. At times, fishermen were successful, but mostly they came away unhappy with the days results. Recalling those days, I remember back to March of 1928, a lake that was virgin in many respects. No pollution, no other fishermen on the water, and the water skiers had not been invented as yet. I saw my Dad take 10 bass weighing 46 lbs.

This catch was hailed as the greatest thing in years. It was the highlight of his fishing, not only for his previous fishing experiences, but it would remain so for a period of 25 years, at which time I FORCED Spoonplugging upon him. In the last 5 years of his life he caught more fish than he had in the previous seventy!

Many fishermen, back in the so-called "good old days", didn't catch fish, just as they *don't* today! So don't any of you young fishermen start using present day fishing conditions as an *excuse* for not going fishing, nor as the excuse for not catching any.

My father, like fishermen today, had many excuses when he had no success. He worked hard at fishing, and part of his reputation as a good fisherman came from the fact that he made more casts than anyone else and fished longer hours.

He was always looking for some shortcut to success. He read all of the glowing reports where some poor jerk credited success to some magic gimmick or fishing water in an area far from the beaten path. He bought every new gadget that came on the market, swallowing completely the glowing terms made by the advertisements.

It wasn't until his fishing life was about over that he came to the realization that most anything will catch a fish at some time or other. He came to the point where he began to see *why* certain lures were better than others at times. He finally realized that successful fishing is purely mechanical, and that certain

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tools *must* be used. Tools that would allow him to control his fishing as the situations arose. He never fully threw away all the misinformation about where the fish were, how they lived, and what made them tick. He admitted that what he learned in the last days explained why he had all those fishless days when actually the water was working with lunker fish.

He had been thoroughly *brain-washed* by old wives' tales and gimmick sales. He had put things down as facts before all of the evidence was in. After casting a shoreline for hours on end with no luck, he decided to switch to a lure seldom used (usually the last one in the box) with its off-color paint. The fourth cast produced a nice fish, and for years after he could kick himself for not putting it on sooner.

He failed to realize that if he had used this particular lure just a few minutes earlier, in that particular spot, it could have been just as *ineffective* as all the rest. Or that, if he had been using any one of the previous lures *at that particular time*, and *in that particular place*, he would have had the same good results! Still further, he did not realize that if he had been casting those good areas (fished previously), at that particular time, he might have had better luck.

Very few fishermen will take the time to learn from others, nor do they learn by their own experiences. For example, let us observe a couple of fishermen in a boat. They are casting a shoreline. One of them turns around in the boat and makes a long cast toward the middle of the lake. He explains that he has some

loose line on his reel that he wants to remove.

The lure sinks, and when he picks it up to bring in, he has a heavy strike and subsequently lands a fine fish! They, however, continue to cast the shoreline, and throughout the day get quite a bang in recalling how that "crazy" fish was caught on such a cast! (They did not catch a single fish along the shoreline.)

Let us observe two other fishermen under the same conditions. One of them makes a cast toward deep water to straighten out his line, and after landing the "crazy" fish, makes the comment, "Now why did I catch that fish on that cast? We had better stop right here and find out some answers". While checking the area, they note a bar that ran from shore at this particular place, and the long cast had reached the edge of the channel. They also found that additional casts to this spot produced additional fish.

They marked the spot and on later trips found that fish were not here at all times, but ever so often they would catch a limit. So on every fishing trip they checked to see if there were any fish at this place. If no fish were found, they went back to casting the shoreline.

The first fishermen didn't gain anything from catching the fish in deep water.

The second group gained a little knowledge that paid off for them in later trips.

Where the first group failed to learn anything from their experience — the latter group gained only a *fraction* of the knowledge that should have been gained by their experience. They should have gone



Buck Perry and a limit catch of 6 bass from another "fished out" lake. Buck has been producing catches like these, to the amazement of local "experts", for some 30 years now. Why don't more fishermen want to LEARN how to catch fish? Because we all tend to be lazy . . . we'd rather put our money across the counter for some shiny new piece of equipment that will have all the fish leaping in our boat.

further and tried to find out "why" the fish were at this place once in a while. They could have gained knowledge here that would have solved the whole fishing picture for them. Not only in this lake, but in any lake that they might fish.

Before SPOONPLUGGING was put down in written form, such as found in the Spoonplugging booklets, a great deal of study was necessary and many different types of water checked. To be able to put in writing a statement that is a fact and has merit, a great deal of time and study must be put into it.

No fisherman, or person, should ever make a statement about a fishing fact until he has checked out his findings thoroughly. The potential fisherman, and the novice fisherman, deserves to be told fact, not fancy-truth, not whimsy-realities, not dreams — or else he will become discouraged and disheartened.

Many statements have been stated or printed as facts, when in reality they were not. These "facts" were no doubt made from limited information, gathered from limited experiences and from very limited areas. The "fishing world" of most fisher-

men, and for that matter the world of most people, is very small.

As most people do, the fisherman derives his experience from his immediate surroundings. He unconsciously feels that the world, more or less, rotates around his area or his activities. He might even get to the place that he believes his observations, or his fishing experiences, are universal. He has not had the time or has not been able to experience how big this country and world is. What conditions exist beyond his own circle is unknown.

Fishing conditions, waters, weather and people vary by the thousands. What is considered "fact" in one place would be laughed at in another! What a fisherman says is the best procedure for fishing in one area might be considered insane in another.

The Spoonplugging booklets were written from observations and tests gained over many years of fishing experience. The most important part of these experiences was the fact that they were not limited in scope. They involved waters and species of fish found from one end of this country to the other. Every possible type of water and weather conditions

was tested. Thousands of fish were taken, with each fish playing its part in arriving at a conclusion or fact.

The Spoonplugging booklets were written for fishermen all over the country. The statements made fit universally.

A tremendous amount of effort and study went into being sure no localized situation would confuse or harm fishermen in other areas. The only way this could be done was to stick to facts about fish, weather, water and lure types, and how this should be used or presented. Presentation had to be done so as to be suitable for all conditions and all localities.

All types of presentation, both casting and trolling, had to be done. But in some waters not all were possible or advisable. In some areas certain presentations were not possible or permitted by law. In other places types of lures could not possibly be used due to water conditions. Nonetheless, the presentations and lure types were not contradictory nor in error.

Spoonplugging is based on what must be known and upon proper presentation of lures to consistently catch fish. Facts are facts, and they are conclusive. In stating them we are not interested, nor do we care about some new exotic lure or some local method. All that was ever desired was to be able to go to any lake, stream, or reservoir, in any locality, and fish for any species of fish present, to be able to feel at home on any water, and to be sure that if anyone caught a fish on that particular day, *we would be one of them!*

I once heard a well-known writer make the statement, "Boy, if I could design the perfect lure, I could retire tomorrow." He, too, harbored the desire to have a lure that when thrown in the water — no matter where — would cause the fish to rush with a frenzy to grab it.

Many years ago I had the desire to design a lure, but my reasons differed from those of my writing friend in that I had no thought of monetary value. Neither did I, for a minute,

Editor's note:

E. L. (Buck) Perry, of Hickory, North Carolina, is the man we credit with being the father and teacher of structure fishing. It was Buck's discoveries about the habits and movement of game fish that made possible the entire modern era of angling. We also consider him to be America's greatest living fisherman, a man who has become a legend in his own time. Recently one of the giant national magazines wanted to do a feature article on Buck, but wanted to bill him as the inventor of the Spoonplug. Buck refused by saying he didn't want to be remembered as the inventor of a "piece of tin". The Spoonplug which he invented is only a tool of his trade like a hammer or a saw to a carpenter. It is Buck's discoveries and fantastic fishing knowledge that will make him immortal in the world of angling. We are privileged to have Buck as a frequent contributor to *Fishing Facts*. This is his fourth article. Read it well, you are receiving some of the basic knowledge that started the whole era of structure fishing.

think that a lure could be designed that would catch fish without effort on the part of fishermen. My reason for thinking of a new lure design was for the purpose of having a lure for my own personal use that would allow me to have some *control* over my fishing. The lures available, at that time, could offer little more than action to a limited degree, and in a variety of colors.

I was considered a rather successful fisherman using the lures that were available, but I fished hard and for many long hours to get my catches. Observations made over the years convinced me that if a lure could be designed that would *allow me to control speed and depth* to some degree, then these *controls* combined with color, action and size could make the fisherman's desire for consistent catches become a reality instead of a dream.

With this objective in mind, I turned to my tinsnips, and from sheets of metal began the laborious task of trying to create a lure that could be trolled or cast; was capable of maintaining depth *whatever* speed being used; would not spin out of the water at high speeds; with differ-

ent actions built in that would vary according to the need of the speed being used; and so balanced that it would come to the top of the water when fouled.

I soon found that I had set for myself no small task. If I got speed, I lost depth; if I got depth, the action was gone, and so on and on. Over a period of many months, every available minute was spent on the lake — cutting, bending, twisting and snipping metal. I often felt that the only thing I was accomplishing was raising the water level of the lake. More and more as I worked on the design, though, I learned what affected or made possible the features I was seeking.

After arriving at a model that proved satisfactory, I began making some for my own use. Later, friends were given samples, and when my friends became too numerous to supply, the idea of making lures to sell was born.

(I am glad that my desire to create a new lure was not born from the idea of getting rich, as this dream would have been totally shattered!

I have never had the heart to tell my writer friend that his dream is "all

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wet". Dreams are to be fostered — not shattered. He will pass many happy hours contemplating his dream of fame and riches, never realizing the sad truth that fishing habits follow generation after generation in the same manner and are not easily displaced; and that you can show a fisherman how to catch a bushel basket of fish, and he will only shake his head and say, "I don't believe it" even though he helped catch the fish!)

Originally, Spoonplugs were not designed to be sold. They were built for many reasons; the main one being that no lures were available that allowed *control* of depth or speed to any great degree.

There was also a need for a lure that could do *specific* jobs in casting and trolling; one that could be used in mapping to determine what the bottom of a lake looked like, and how it was made up; one that could be a tool that would allow fishing knowledge to be *transferred* to others. You can tell a fisherman how to fish properly, but without a tool to allow implementation, this knowledge would be of little value.



*Carl Maiz, Gene Strang, and Terry O'Malley with one of those catches from a "hopeless" lake about halfway between Milwaukee and Chicago. Funny thing about these fish . . . they didn't know they weren't supposed to be there!*

*Incidentally, these fish were all kept fresh in an ice chest from the moment they were caught, then they were put on stringers for the purpose of this picture. We told you about this in our August issue. You catch 'em fresh, eat 'em fresh. Don't drag those fish around half the day in the hot and sometimes gasoline-tainted water of the surface.*



*Gene Strang of Chicago and Terry O'Malley with some "small" fish taken recently from a lake that's covered with skiers, speedboats, sailboats, weeds, fishermen . . . etc. A typical "hopeless" lake!*

Spoonplugs will catch most anything that swims. But above all, they are *teaching and disciplinary tools* which enable catches to be made, which are the important and necessary things lures must do.

Proper equipment, as well as lures, is equally important in teaching. It would be a great injustice for students to attend classes and not learn what correct equipment must do. It would be impossible to teach proper trolling methods with a limber, buggy whip rod, or a rubber

#### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*Our policy is to have our writers name the names of all products described in their articles so that our readers know what we are talking about, but we will not let our pages be used for commercial "selling" of any products. This is not easy at times, and is further complicated by the fact that we have a mail order tackle sales division and carry much of their advertising. One reason for that is that we don't have the large amounts of national advertising to help pay the publishing costs, and almost no magazine in America can be printed and delivered for the price of the subscription or newsstand sales. That's an awful good reason, of course, but another one is that it does you little good for us to describe items if you can't get them in your part of the country. We are, however, proud of our merchandise, proud of our air-tight guarantee policies, and unashamed to make a profit on specialized items that are not widely available.*

*Lest some fisherman feel that we are trying to sell him yet another lure (Spoonplugs), or some tackle manufacturer feel that we are trying to cut into his business by trying to replace his lures with Spoonplugs, the following words of clarification are necessary:*

*Spoonplugs do not take the place of anything that is now in your tackle box or on your dealer's shelves. In fact, they make every other lure more valuable to you! When you have located the fish through the precise controls engineered into Spoonplugs, you can then choose to cast to the fish or troll for them with any lure you desire that is right for the occasion. (Surface, deep, medium-deep, etc.). That includes using live bait, too!*

band for a line. So, to transfer knowledge and allow students to learn, proper equipment must be used.

All Spoonplugger items, such as lures, rods, lines, etc., were designed especially for SPOONPLUGGING. They *had* to be, none existed. Every item was designed to do a specific job.

If there are any who would be critical that mention is made of these specific tools and equipment, then so be it. It is unfortunate that a successful curriculum for fishing must, at times, be associated with the sale of fishing gear; but we feel that proper explanation as to how this has come about is quite sufficient.

Our rewards have not been monetary, that's for sure. They have been largely derived from the thanks of those who write to say, "Thanks to you, my fishing has taken on new meaning" or to be able to help the many who write and wish so fervently to be able to catch some fish for a change. The results speak for themselves.

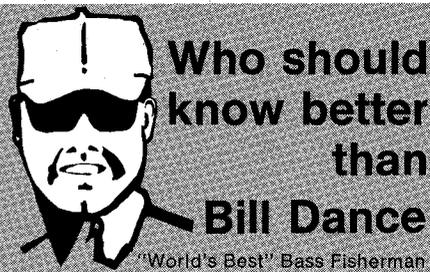
*We teach fishing. If proper equipment is used, we care not what the brand name might be.*

The most common remark that a traveling Spoonplugger hears after he has spent hours, and possibly days, working out the success keys on a particular lake is, "He didn't catch those fish in this lake. I've fished it for years and have never caught fish like that".

The skeptic has not caught fish "like that" because he is confused about correct fishing and especially confused about lures and their proper role.

There are many good lures and baits available to the fisherman. He can take the best of them and troll until the paint wears off, or cast them until the hooks fall off, but he certainly won't catch fish using them over the front lawn or down the center of the main drag. No one would raise an eyebrow in disbelief over this statement. But if we state that you can waste a full days fishing by running lures, or placing them, in the wrong places, then we get an entirely different reaction.

We go to great lengths to explain that **MOST OF THE TIME, MOST OF THE WATER CONTAINS NO FISH.** We point out how very important it is to keep lures *in position*. We keep repeating, "Don't fish where they



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### Overcoming Shallow Water Fishing Hazards

I've always considered shallow water fishing a real test of a fisherman's skill.

In the early morning and evening Bass leave the protection of deeper water to feed on shallow water

baifish. Without their natural protection Bass become extremely sensitive to the sound and movement of a fisherman's cast. Always remember to remain *unusually* quiet — let the wind take your boat into the target area and if wading, avoid unsure footing. Whenever possible cast away from your shadow.

Probably the most trying hazards to overcome in shallow water are the snags from natural obstacles — logs, stumps, roots, and weeds. Bass almost always seek the protection of these obstacles so, to be successful in shallow water its best to use a lure that gives you plenty of action and at the same time

avoids snags. **Burke's "Dedly Dudly"** works best for me ... this dual action spinner works as a "buzzing" surface lure if the retrieve is started as it hits the water, or as a "root dodging" deep runner by allowing it to sink below the surface. The instant-starting blade design also lets you fish the Dedly Dudly slower than any other spinner.

*Bill Dance*



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ain't". And still we see most fishermen presenting lures or bait in areas where they will never be able to catch fish.

This is tragic — but understandable. Because they don't know that "they don't know"!

You can't catch fish unless you put the lure where the fish are. So, the next time you use that so called "killer" lure with no results — give some thought as to who or what is at fault.

Much has been said about presentation of lures being an important part of catching fish. If lures or bait is not presented to the fish where it can be seen it is not likely



*This is jet airline Captain Don Nichols of LaGrange, Illinois, a longtime fishing friend of Buck Perry's. Buck calls Don the greatest fisherman in America. Don thinks Buck is. (Regardless of who is correct, that's pretty fast company!)*

*Don didn't catch these lunker bass from a virgin lake . . . or with his knowledge of jet aircraft. He caught them with the kind of FISHING KNOWLEDGE that Buck has been bringing you in this series of four articles, and with the kind of knowledge-in-depth that Buck brings to his Fishing Schools. If you don't catch big fish like these consistently, it's because Don knows more about fish than you do . . . it's that simple! What he learned, you can learn, if you want to bad enough to make the necessary effort.*

that any fish will be caught. So presentation cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Presentation of lures should be done both casting and trolling.

Trolling, as we point out, is a very important part of successful fishing — casting, likewise, is very important. Most Spoonpluggers use trolling for “learning” their lake and *locating* fish. After this is done, then casting becomes very important.

There are many instances where only one procedure is advisable. This is due to the make-up of the water, or the conditions of weather and water, and how fish are reacting to these conditions.

Some waters are so crowded with weeds it is impossible to troll to any degree, others are so full of vegetation that only top-water or weedless lures can be used efficiently. There are other waters that are, for all practical purposes, unfit for casting. We can just imagine fishermen going into the Great Lakes after coho equipped only with casting gear. At times, weather and water conditions are such that it would not be advisable to go after straggler fish by the casting route. Trolling would be the answer at this particular time, but a few days before, casting this same water *would have been* the correct procedure to limit out in short order on lunker fish!

There are other examples where some situation calls for only one type of presentation, but the thing we must always be concerned about is presenting lures at the right place, at the right time, and in the right manner. This calls for both casting and trolling. There are very few waters where both cannot be done most of the time.

The important thing that we must consider at this time, is not *whether* we prefer to cast or troll. The important thing is that we must be in a position to take advantage of the fishing situation as it confronts us. *We must go about our fishing in such a way as to make us better fishermen.* Most will agree that this can be measured in results or in catches. *We must not limit ourselves to any one particular procedure.*

We have witnessed fishermen limiting themselves in casting and trolling by the gear they choose. We have seen some using boats and motors so big and so elaborately rigged they cost a small fortune, yet

the fisherman was limited as to his presentation. He could only proceed to the near vicinity of a productive structure and cast the shallows. It would be difficult and unlikely that he could position the boat properly for complete coverage of the structures. Usually, the fisherman who is not properly equipped with boat and motor is not equipped tackle-wise to efficiently do anything but casting, and in most cases, a limited type of casting. And as far as trolling is concerned, they are not *equipped* to do so to any degree of success.

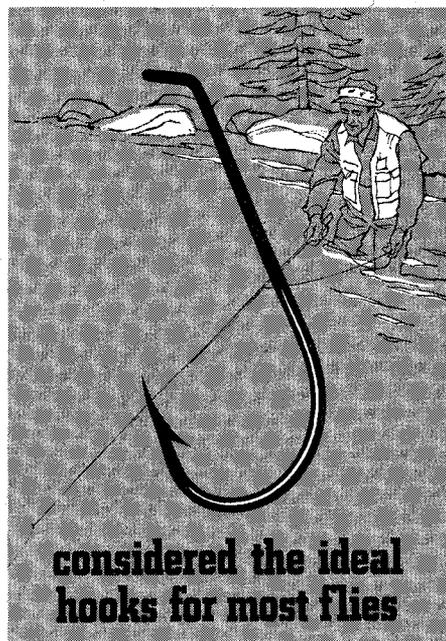
There are other areas where choice of gear limits proper presentation. The fellow who expects a spinning outfit to perform adequately in trolling is another example. A limp line and limber rod gives no “feel”. The wide jerking sweeps of the rod would make it difficult for the lure to reach any degree of the maximum performance for which it was designed. If the lure is to “talk” and give information, then it must be given the opportunity to perform and relate that performance.

Almost any presentation will catch fish at one period or another during the year, and almost any lure, or tackle, will catch fish at one time or another; but the key to successful fishing is being *in position*, having *knowledge and tackle*, to take advantage of any situation. If one set of rigging will not allow the fisherman to expand his fishing knowledge or presentation, then he should provide himself with equipment that will handle the situation — whether it be casting or trolling.

If a fisherman took into consideration the many types of water available, should he expect to consistently catch fish if he does not troll? (Note that we used the word “consistently”, which adds more dimension to the question.)

We have no hesitation in answering this question with a quick NO. Trolling can be a very important phase of fishing. Some states have restrictions on trolling and some water conditions makes it impossible to troll, so there is little the fisherman can do about these particular conditions. But, in most instances, trolling is allowed and water conditions are such that it can be done.

As we observe the average troller fishing his particular body of water, we find his greatest restrictions are *those that he inflicts upon himself.* Namely — improper equipment and



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lack of knowledge as to “how” and “what” trolling is all about.

Equipment that we normally see being used is good for one thing only — dragging a lure. A long, limber rod that jerks back and forth as it's pulled through the water is jerking the lure in a like manner. No lure can perform with any stability in speed and with very much depth control in a situation such as this. A limp line, usually used in conjunction with this type of rod, gives a tremendous “bow” to the line; affecting control still further. “Feel”, as it should be felt, is nonexistent with a trolling rig of this type, so even if a fisherman has the knowhow, he could not do the job of trolling adequately with this type of rig.

On the other hand, a troller with the proper rig could be just as handicapped in achieving the proper results, if he does not know *why* trolling is important and *how* it



*Gene Strang of Chicago and only a couple of fish from a close-to-Chicago lake. Gene is one of Buck's most recent pupils. As he "improves" he'll catch more and bigger ones!*

*Don Nichols again, and his pretty wife Margie. They collaborated in this limit catch of largemouth bass. Most fishermen would give an arm or a leg to catch even one bass like those lunkers on that stringer . . . with Don and Margie it's only their US-UAL thing. You see, they EXPECT to catch a limit like this every time they go out . . . and nearly always do!*



should properly be done. We would venture to say that the caster, who only casts the shoreline and who has not the foggiest notion about presentation, has a thousand percent better chance of catching a fish than the troller who does not know how to present lures properly in trolling!

On one occasion, I was instructing a fisherman in the proper procedures for successful trolling. The particular lake we were fishing was large and the structures were long and rather flat, extending into the lake in some instances a quarter of a mile or more.

Shortly after getting on the lake, I threw a marker in water that was a good quarter mile from the nearest shoreline. We then went to the shoreline and began to discuss trolling techniques. During the discussion, he interrupted several times wanting to know why I had thrown the marker in the middle of the lake. I asked him to be patient, and explained that if he trolled this section of the lake properly, he would wind up hitting the marker.

Having fished this particular body of water before, I had thrown the marker on the end of a very large, flat structure. The particular spot where the marker was thrown had a long, narrow "finger" off the main bar, and the end was at a good depth, and make a sharp drop-off into the deepest water in the area. It was a simple matter to drop the marker in the correct position as well-defined shoreline sightings had been made some years before.

After making many trolling passes and following instructions, he burst out laughing; he found he was heading closer and closer to the marker, and had to swerve the boat to keep the motor from chewing up the marker.

To be a successful troller, it is important that each and every lure be kept in proper position. Each lure size will "fish" the water if this is done. At the same time that the water is being fished correctly, the fisherman is "contouring" the bottom to arrive at the spot where the fish will be. The fisherman will leave the lake knowing that he not only fished the water thoroughly, but he has knowledge as to where structures are located, their condition, and their direction.

To be a successful troller includes knowing how to maneuver a boat. To

do this we start the troll and slowly turn the boat toward the shore until the lure starts hitting bottom, (in some lakes when working the shallows with the smaller lures, the lure will come in contact with weeds instead of the bottom). When contact is made slowly head the boat toward the deeper, or open water; then as the lure starts running free, slowly head the boat back toward the shoreline until the lure starts bumping again. By continuing to maneuver the boat in this manner, the lures will always be in position and the contours of the bottom will be followed, regardless of shape.

The degree of correction of the boat is so *slight*, that the lure is never but a few degrees from directly behind the boat.

What would happen if you moved your boat in until the lure started bumping and you just continued to let it bump without ever turning toward deeper water? If this were done, you could start bumping and come into a large flat area; and would then find yourself going out across this big flat area, getting farther and farther away from fishable water.

Now let us suppose you slowly maneuver the boat away from the shallows and the lure starts running free. If you did not begin to correct your heading, and slowly start back toward the shallows, you could shortly find yourself out over 50 feet or more of water, and the lures be completely out of position.

In teaching trolling, one of the main problems we find is that the fisherman OVER-CONTROLS. He does not SLOWLY correct the boat heading, but hastily over-controls, and before he knows it the boat is completely *out of position*, and when the lures make contact or come-off running free, the boat is so far out of position a lot of water has been missed, and it takes time to get the lure back behind the boat again.

When maneuvering the boat in trolling, you have four main things to accomplish: First, keep lures in position; Second, keep lures fishing at all times; Third, learn your waters — know the bottom contours and find the structure breaks; Fourth, arrive at the fish.

If it appears we place a lot of emphasis on trolling, you are correct. In our opinion it takes more skill to become a good troller, than it takes to

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become a good caster. For generations fishermen have been instructed in the proper procedure for casting, but never on procedures for trolling. There is a definite purpose for every trolling maneuver; and in the final analysis, it is trolling that will tell you where, when, why, and how to cast. We can't say the same thing about casting.

While Spoonpluggers are taught the importance of trolling, this does not rule out casting by any means. The most important thing we must consider in fishing, is not whether we prefer to troll or cast; the important thing is that we must be in a position to do both in a sane and intelligent manner. Whatever the situation calls for, be rigged and capable of doing.

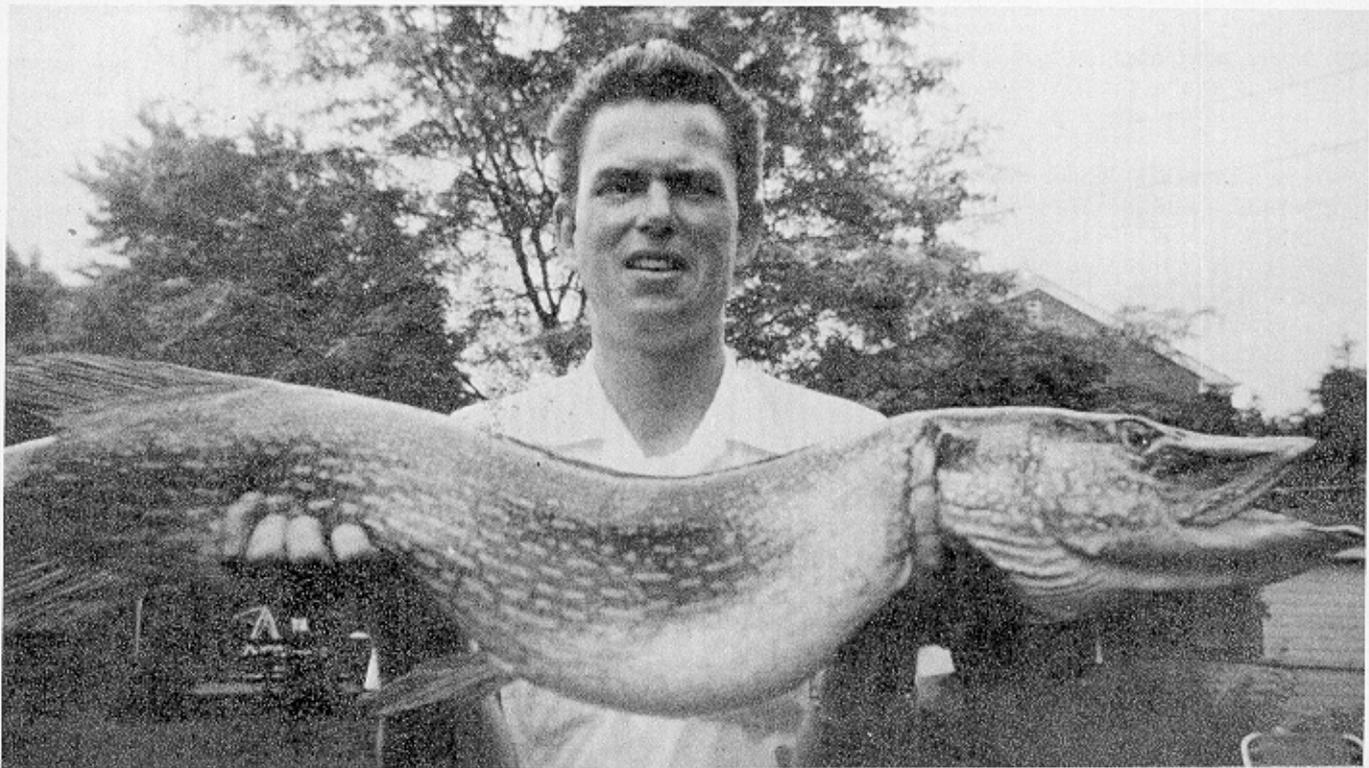
A subject very seldom discussed is the position of a troller in the boat. This can make the difference between correct presentation and whether trolling becomes a chore or a pleasure. On occasions, we have heard a fisherman make the comment that Spoonplugging is work. He doesn't know it, but what he is

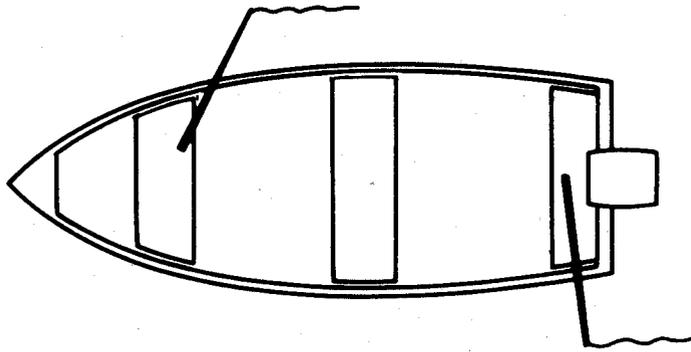
*Ho hum, Buck Perry and another catch of bass. Same old stuff. Monotonous, isn't it? Is it? How would you like some monotony like this?*



*Just another picture of another big fish taken by Terry O'Malley from a "fished out" lake near Chicago.*

*If you are now getting tired of looking at all these pictures of fish that OTHER PEOPLE caught, why not resolve that you are going to learn how to do it too? No magic, no secrets, no shortcuts, no mystery. Just knowledge . . . knowledge that is available to you. Are you going to do something about it? Begin now!*





saying is that he doesn't know the mechanics of trolling or casting. He is probably the kind of fellow that is not interested in doing much of anything that requires a little discipline, effort, or thinking. The Spoonplucker is actually taking *the easy route*. This is especially true in trolling, as he is letting the motor and lures do most of the work!

However, if a fisherman does not know how or where to sit in the boat, or is not using the correct gear, nor does not know how to hold the rod, fishing can become a chore. The easy route in most things is the best route (unless you get it to the point of doing nothing).

We have discussed the proper gear for trolling in our study of "tools". These tools were discussed, not only for proper presentation, but certainly for their ease of presentation as well.

One of the big advantages of Spoonplugging is the fact that the young, the old, and the handicapped have a chance to catch lunker fish. It does our hearts good to see young boys and girls, men and wives, and some who have lost an arm, getting a great joy from Spoonplugging.

In the drawing shown we will focus our attention on the position of two trollers. The fisherman running the boat is positioned to the right of the motor, facing slightly toward his left; he is steering the boat with his left hand; reel in right hand (more in the palm of the hand rather than holding with a pistol grip) the rod is across his lap and can be supported with the knee, or can even rest on the side of the boat. This position allows him to be comfortable and relaxed. He has very little exertion or

rod movement unless he desires to direct his lures on turns by raising or lowering his rod tip.

The second fisherman should be seated far enough forward in the boat so that each fisherman has no problem of interfering with each other, and this position stabilizes the boat for easier maneuvering. He should be facing toward the motor, working from his left side. He is holding the rod in his lap with both hands. Since his rod is low, he exerts little or no effort to allow his line to swing in against the side of the boat on a turn to the left. On a turn to the right, he doesn't have to do anything, unless he desires to make his lure "cut across" on the turn, which is easily done by raising the rod tip.

We have seen fishermen sitting in a boat in the correct position, but trolling from the wrong side of the boat. Such a man will be steering the boat with his left hand, but has his body in a twisted position with his right arm flung out over the side of the boat and holding his rod in a pistol grip fashion. He is unable to control the boat properly in this position, and he certainly has no control over his rod. The contortions that take place when he gets hung on a snag, or when a fish takes, are unbelievable to behold.

Trolling should play an important part in fishing — if done correctly — and for many reasons:

1. More quickly eliminates unproductive water.
2. Greatly facilitates and shortens the time of mapping and contouring.
3. Allows a greater area to be covered to find fish.

4. Produces more stragglers. (Remember these fish are important on those days which produce little or no movement.)
5. Allows more varied and better speed control.
6. Competes with modern day traffic.
7. Makes fishing a family sport.
8. No casting skill is needed.
9. Allows the use of lure weights and sizes which may not be useable with the available casting rig.
10. Tells when, where and how to cast.

The length of line being used in trolling will affect the depth at which lures run. For instance, if 60 to 80 feet of line is first let out, additional line will allow the lure to run deeper.

Let us set up some categories of line length:

1 - Short line	10 - 20 yards
2 - Medium line	30 - 40 yards
3 - Long line	50 - 80 yards

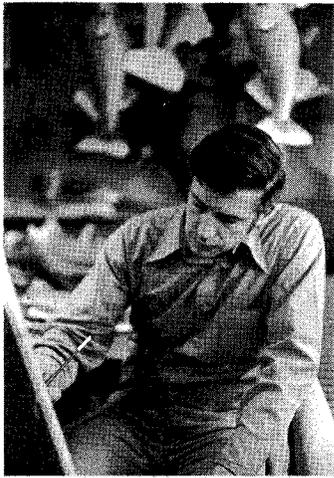
When trolling shallow water, a shorter line length is normally desirable over a long line; depth control can be accomplished better with lure size rather than line length. When deeper sections are fished with the larger lures a long line is necessary, and in order.

Spoonplugs were designed with a limited depth range, this was desired so the lures would not vary their depth too much with a change in line length. This design allows the smaller, shallow working lures to hold their depth range with a minimum of line length; and the larger sizes, which call for a longer line length, would have their depth range limited to a controllable line length. In other words, the lures were designed to get their maximum depth range on a minimum of line length; additional line not adding any appreciable depth to the lures.

Spoonplug sizes and their running depth as per recommended line length is as follows:

500 Series	2 to 4 feet	Short to medium line length
400 Series	4 to 6 feet	Short to medium
250 Series	6 to 9 feet	Short to medium
200 Series	9 to 12 feet	Medium to long
100 Series	12 to 15 feet	Medium to long
900-800 Series	15 to 25 feet	Medium to extra long

It should again be noted that the diameter of the line will affect lure depth. The larger diameter will give a greater line drag which results in a depth loss. The above figures on



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depth were based on the smaller diameter lines (.019 - .021 inch).

The medium line length (30 - 40 yards) is a good length to run on Spoonplugs). This length will give good control and depth. Before the 100 Series lure is removed, extra, or long line should be used to get the maximum depth of this lure. Any water shallower than this will have already been "strained" by the other lures on a medium line length.

Normal trolling will not scare fish. They may be more "skittish" in the early part of the season with its colder water, but as weather warms and water temperatures rise, the passing of a boat is sometimes an aid. Different line lengths would take care of these conditions if they should appear — longer lines in the early season, less as it warms.

In this light, let us emphasize the shorter line length in hot weather. During hot weather, many times the troller does not run through the lure sizes with a short enough line. This is especially true when working for smallmouth bass. At times the line should be no more than 5 to 10 yards behind the boat; in or beside the "boil" of the motor. A good rule to follow under hot weather conditions is to go through the lure sizes with a short line before using the recommended medium lengths. In areas where shad are plentiful, the correct line length under these hot conditions, would be the distance the shad are observed breaking in the wake of the motor.

The shoreline would be a determining factor in the amount of line to let out. A shorter length of line would be used in trolling along

a crooked or irregular shoreline that would be used in trolling along a straight shoreline. The shorter line length would make it easier to follow the crooks and turns.

In trolling, the path the lure takes behind the boat can be controlled, to a great extent, by the position of the rod tip. If the rod tip is high, the lures will "cut across" on all turns, but if the rod tip is low, the water drag on the line will cause the line and lure to more directly follow the path of the boat.

If a boat contains two trollers, the one on the "outside" of a turn should put his rod tip low and allow the line to come against the side of the boat. The "outside" line will then be kept safe from the motor and the lure will not cut across and tangle with the other line.

Another situation that must be stressed, in the light of line length and depth, is the problems that a fisherman starts to run into after he reaches the fifteen foot depth. The amount of line used, the type of line used, or the lure types used to reach depths below fifteen feet will separate the men from the boys.

It becomes increasingly more difficult to have control below this depth. The "feel" starts to disappear, interpretation becomes more difficult, just "fishing" becomes more difficult and tiring.

As depth increases, the fisherman has to become *more* exact. A fish reacts to depth in such a way that he is more difficult to catch, and a *more exact presentation* must be made in order to make him take.

In summation, line length becomes important for many reasons:

Depth control, keeping lures in position with proper control, learning the make-up of the bottom, mapping and interpretation of structure.

If these things are not accomplished, we will be "dragging" a lure rather than "trolling".

We are not too concerned as to whether you use Spoonplugs, nor if your presentation is exactly as described, but we are concerned with proper depth and speed control.

If, at any time, the method of presentation or the type of gear being used does not allow depth and speed control fully at any particular time or place, the results can be measured in terms of how much each is able to do. You have to be the judge and determine whether your method and tools will do the job effectively and successfully.

All fishing FAILURES must be answered in terms of depth and speed control. All fishing SUCCESSES must be answered in terms of depth and speed control. The minute a fisherman credits failures and successes to AIDS (size, color and action), he is on the downhill road. If lures and gear is used that will not give depth and speed control, he is headed downhill. But above all, if lures, bait, or methods of presentation do not *constantly* act as a reminder of speed and depth, the same downhill road is ahead. *Future growth and fishing success will depend on just how much you keep these two controls in mind.*

Always remember that depth control means WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW. Speed controls will *make* the fish take, and also tell you WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW. This puts all tackle items in their right perspective, as you should know WHAT each will do, WHEN it is needed, WHERE it should be used, WHY it is needed, and HOW it is used.

You should never stop learning. The day you become an "expert" is the day your fishing growth stops.

The day you become selfish in your fishing is the day you stop your fishing growth.

The day you forget depth and speed control, and put faith in size, color and action (aids) is not only the day you stop your fishing *growth*, but it is the day you start downhill. Pretty soon you'll be asking yourself, "what happened?"