



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER



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The last meeting was held January 17, 2005 with 19 members present.

President Denny started the meeting by complaining of the extremely boring winter so far. The lakes froze over enough to get a little taste of ice fishing and almost immediately the weather warmed, it rained for what seemed like days, and the ice was soon unsafe to fish. Denny and Mike Price have spent their mind-numbing days making ice flies. They now think they have enough for the next 17 years. If the ice weather doesn't cooperate soon, they may have to start a retail outlet.

As the discussion of ice fishing continued, John Bales told of being ice fishing for blue gills with Denny several years ago. Denny was fishing with a rig using 2 ice flies set up as a spreader. Upon set the hook on a bite, Denny's line broke. Later in the day, John felt a bite, set the hook and knew he had a good fish. As he got it to the hole, he was surprised to discover he had hooked Denny's broken line with a good bluegillon each hook! Denny got his flies back....don't know who got the 'gills.

Denny also announced that John Zaborney has set the date of his wedding to T.J. on June 11, 2005. Roger Zentz of Plymouth, Indiana paid his dues to the club and to the National Spoonpluggers so he is now an official member. Roger fishes with veteran Spoonpluggers, Frank Cipria who moved to the Plymouth area from the Chicago area a year or so ago. Frank has made a believer out of Roger! Director of Education, John Bales spoke on the importance of trolling the shallows. So much of the

past year has been devoted to fishing deep water that some may have come to the conclusion that the shallows can be excluded.

John pointed out that the shallows MUST be mastered before we can understand how to fish the deeper water. John suggested a trip to Allegan Lake in Michigan as a great place to learn to troll the shallows. It is a lake with no weeds to speak of. It can be trolled without a depth finder. Most of the lake is very shallow and flat, but there exists some deeper water that can be discovered by trolling just as the "Green Book" instructs us.

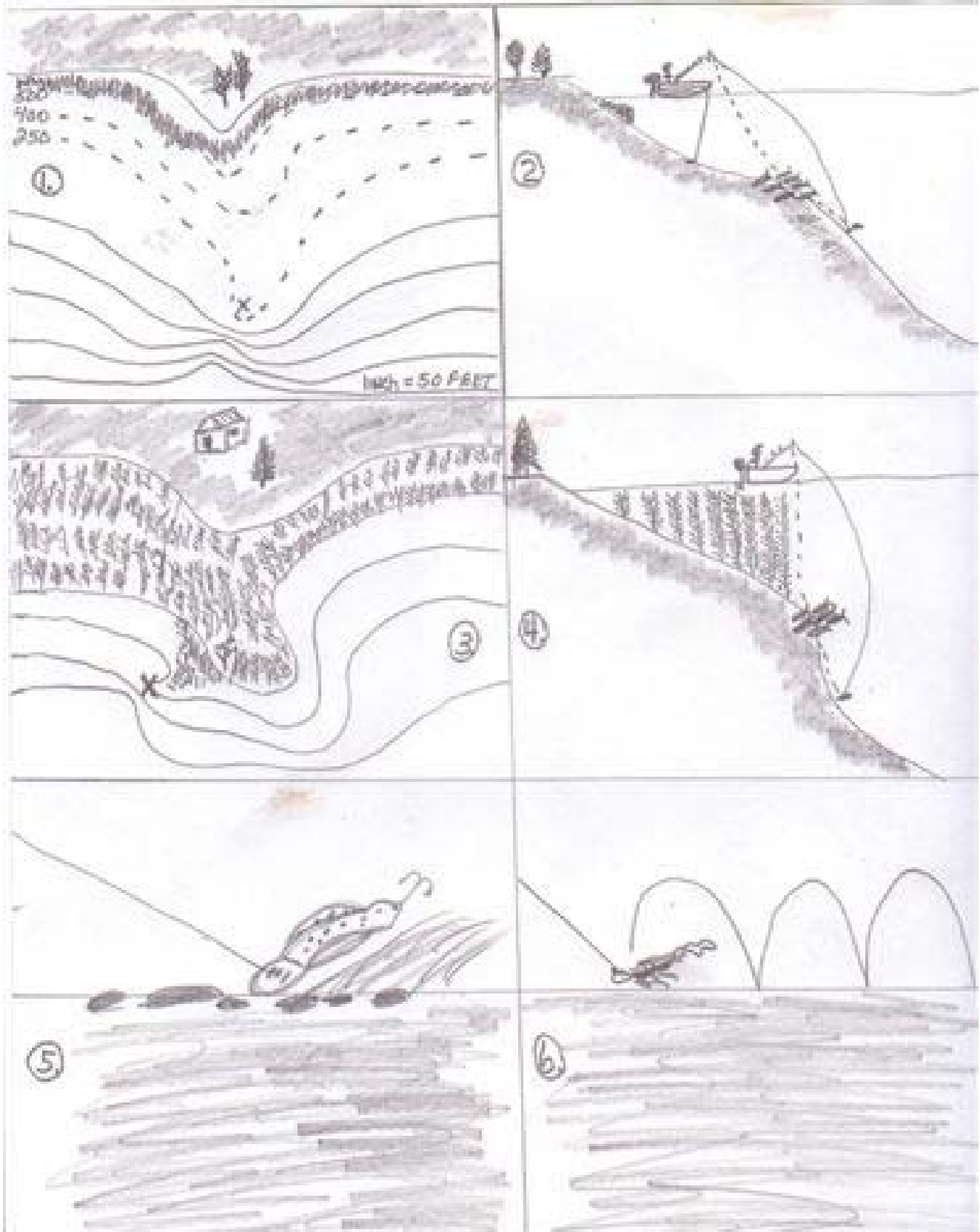
Contour trolling the shallows teaches us the "where" segment of Spoonplugging. Trolling the shallows directs us to the structure situations and prepares us for the deeper waters. There aren't many opportunities for shortcuts in Spoonplugging. The only one might be to spent a day on the water with an experienced Spoonplugger.

It was also reported that Leo Seltenright may be having hip surgery soon if he hasn't had it already. We wish him luck in recovering before Spring arrives.

Our club dues are now due (a book of stamps) unless you'd rather receive a copy of the newsletter by e-mail.

NEXT MEETING: February 21, 2005
at the Kendallville Public Library.
6:30 P.M.

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



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Good Spoonplugging



By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor

The ultimate goal for all Spoonpluggers is to get into a school of big bass and have them coming every cast. For those who have done this, you know how fast and furious the catching can be. We must keep the fish in a feeding frenzy or the school will be gone in a hurry and our efforts will be for nothing. A lost fish or two, the wrong choice of lures to control our depth and speeds or the wrong boat position and the chance of loading the boat is lost. Getting into a school of big bass is very rewarding to the fisherman. Once it happens, there is a self motivation that will last until the next group of fish is found. Every situation is different. Every one must be thought out as to how best to present your lures to the fish to keep them in a feeding frenzy. This time frame of thought has to be done in a hurry while the fish are at a certain spot and active. A lot is involved in a very short period of time. Mr. Perry lists water colors in terms of what is best and then it gets worse from there. This is to inform us what to expect if we intend to spend a lot of time on the clear bodies of water or the success that we may have by searching out the lakes with good water color.

We could list casting positions in what is best and add some things that make the actual catching of the fish worse. In figure 1 (top view) and figure 2(side view), we have an ideal situation for getting into the casting position and making a big catch. The water color is a dark yellow green. We have located a bar and have thrown a marker on the tip of the finger that has a sharper break into the deepest water. On our very first straight line pass across the tip of the bar, we hit a good bass on a 200. The fish is landed quickly and it was noticed that the lure was very close to the marker when the fish took and jumped. The boat is quickly anchored near the marker and we begin fan casting with a 100. On our third cast we make contact with the school and we are in business. Fourteen casts in a row we land a bass from 4lbs to 6 3/4lbs. On the fifteenth and sixteenth cast we draw a blank. Right away we pick up another rod with a heavy jump type lure and catch two more fish before it is over. This is a picture perfect situation for a great catch and it may happen often here. What is in our favor here? Good water color. A shallow or non existent weedline. The depths involved allows for easy presentation of lures. A hard and clean bottom allows us to walk a Spoonplug and have control of our depth and speed at the same time. All of these combined makes this place a consistent fishing hole where we can have success.

Let's make things worse. Figures 3 (top view) and 4 (side view) are of a bar in a natural lake where the water is clear. We now have a 20 foot weedline. The weeds could also be submerged trees or stumps. We have located a nice bar and on the left side there is a nice finger which breaks off into the deepest water. We have thrown a marker on the end of the finger a few feet up into the weeds. On our very first straight line pass with a 700 our lure ticks the tip of the weedy finger and a good bass takes. We are quite sure that the fish took very near our marker so as soon as the fish is landed we waste no time in getting the boat positioned and go directly to the cast. We must think this over in how we must place the boat so that we have the same control of depth and speed as we did on the troll. The boat is positioned directly over the outside edge of the weeds about a boat length back from the tip of the weedy finger which will allow us to make the correct cast. A 700 or 800 are chosen and the cast is made and allowed to sink all the way to the bottom. We are trying to duplicate what we just did on the troll and that is what made the fish take in the first place. The line is sunk and a couple of reel turns are made to take the bow out of the line. A quick and steady retrieve is started and we feel the lure bumping and on the second bump we are totally fouled with a heavy stringy moss. We know that this type of control cannot be had so we quickly switch to a heavy jump type lure. In six casts we get three bites and catch two more good fish before the action is over.

Let's go back to figure one and two. We hit a good fish on the 200 on our first straight line trolling pass. Due to the lack of weeds, we are able to anchor the boat slightly shallower than we hit the fish and by fan casting we have no trouble finding the fish. There is no wall of weeds to get in the way, the bottoms are hard and clean and our depths and speeds can be controlled at the same time. Our boat positioning could be off a little and as long as we can reach the fish on the cast and walk the lure through them, we may still make a catch. We can't say the same for figures 3 and 4. The deep heavy weedline limits us to more of an exact anchoring position to present the lures correctly on the cast. If we are off just a little, our casts cannot be made on the money. We are limited to counting down our free swimming, bottom bumping lures and trying to tick the weeds without touching the mossy bottom. This is a difficult and timely task. A jump type lure is in order but will not give a control that will keep the fish in a frenzy. Figures 5 (a bottom bumping lure) and figure 6 (a jump type lure) are shown because these are our choices of lures when going to the cast. It cannot be over stated that the Spoonplug is the only lure that when cast and retrieved at a fast speed that will keep the fish in a feeding frenzy. The Spoonplug should be the first choice for casting in any fishing situation. Only after checking with the correct size Spoonplug for the situation should a jump type lure be used.

There are many factors that determine if fish are caught on the cast after hitting the fish on the troll. How well the structure situation is interpreted. The use of markers (before the trolling passes are made) and after a fish is hooked. And finally, proper positioning of the boat. The right cast cannot be made if the boat is not in the right spot.

You will want to be totally prepared for when a school of fish is found. It can be a real pleasure! 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:

During your fishing **you should not think of WEATHER in terms of temperature.** This does not mean changes in temperature will not affect fish, nor does it mean the fisherman doesn't change his tactics. (Later on you'll find if present your lures and bait properly, you'll automatically take care of temperature). **YOU SHOULD VIEW WEATHER (and TEMPERATURE) IN TERMS OF LIGHT.**

With this in mind, we can now make a Spoonplugger's guideline:

THE LIGHTER OR BRIGHTER IT IS, THE TOUGHER THE FISHING WILL BE. THE DARKER THE CONDITIONS, THE BETTER IT WILL BE.

We have no way of knowing how many types of weather conditions might occur during a fishing season. One look at any weather map will show all types of high or low pressure areas, several kinds of “fronts,” storms, hot areas or wet or dry areas. You name it—they show it.

We have to pick one of these conditions for a starting point. One that we can use as a **guide** to our fishing. One that will be the **key** for determining our chances for success, and the one that will let us **plan** our tactics. In other words, we have to set us up another guideline. **This guideline is a COLD FRONT.**

It should be noted, the word COLD does not necessarily mean there is a big drop in temperature. The front is actually the dividing line between two masses of air. The difference in temperature of these two masses can vary; at times it will be great, while at others, hardly noticeable. The main difference between the two air masses is that one is warmer, holding a higher moisture content, while the other is a drier mass of cooler air. The former is usually associated with a LOW, while the latter is associated with HIGH. The masses of air which move through the United States are normally from the west to the east. This direction can vary, but for all practical purposes this is the dominant direction.

The front itself is usually associated with very rough weather, such as heavy rain, squall lines (thunder storms), etc. This is especially true when there is a great difference between the two masses of air. If the temperature difference is slight, these fronts are much less discernible.

When observing or viewing a COLD FRONT, here again, **we do not view it in terms of temperature, but instead relate it to LIGHT conditions.** There is a relationship between the light and the temperature, and if there is a great drop in temperature after a front passes, and it lasts for a long period, the light will be affected accordingly.

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