



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER



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Meeting was held at the Kendallville Public Library on December 20th with 18 members and guests present. We had a new member show up because of the Spoonplugging article in the News-Sun getting some attention. We welcomed Dean Schaefer who is interested in catching some fish. We found out that Dean already has the ideal setup for Spoonplugging so he has a good start already.

Denny talked about the muskies that were caught on Webster Lake recently. Denny, Charlie and Mike Price had a ball casting on the well-known spots that break into the deepest water. Charlie forgot his net and Denny and Mike had to up the anchor and give Charlie their net. They did this twice. Way to go guys.

A bit of talk about ice fishing was brought up. I hate to say this but fishing out of a little hole instead of a boat is here! The depression is starting to set in but the reality is that fishing through a little hole is better than a two by four upside the head. Well, not much better.

(Ed. Note: Thanks to John Bales for taking the minutes to the last meeting for me....I owe you, John)

So, It's been several degrees below zero already and the ice is building on the lakes fast. Did we even get below zero last winter? Guess it's time to bring the brass monkeys inside!

Just a reminder to back the drags off your reels for the off-season. Check the guides for wear or looseness and replace if necessary. The guides on the wire-line rods are especially susceptible to wear, so check carefully. Rods are best stored by hanging up from the tip. If you've had your rods in your boat and have been on any salt-covered roads this fall, you had better give your reels a thorough cleaning with hot soapy water and re-lubricate. I'm speaking

from experience here! The reel cleaning is typically a spring-time ritual but you don't want any chance of any salt lying around on your equipment until then!

A note on wire leaders:

Years ago many Spoonpluggers did not use wire leaders even when fishing in waters with toothy critters. It was felt that the use of a leader affected the way the Spoonplug ran and very few fish were ever really lost due to a cut line.

Then came the introduction of the zebra mussel into our world. Now we often **must** use a wire leader no matter what species we are fishing for because of these razor-edged fiends. This, coupled with the fact that many members are hooking up with bigger and bigger muskies and northerns each year makes the use of leaders a fact of life.

Anything we put on our ahead of the Spoonplug can affect its ability to run properly. Keep this in mind. Typically, the heavier the line, the better the feel. However, with the use of a leader, this can be done to excess. We have seen instances of a heavy leader which was such a burden ahead of the Spoonplug that it did not run properly or feel was lost to a certain extent. This is especially true of the smaller size Spoonplugs. Some experimenting may have to be done to match the length/weight of the leader with the size of Spoonplug used. Some of the best leaders are still hand made from the wire line on your wire rod with a #10 barrel swivel and the snap of your choice.

NEXT MEETING: January 17, 2005 at the Kendallville Public Library, 6:30 P.M.
Dues are due! 1 book of 37 cent stamps.

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"

*Below is an excerpt from an **OUTDOOR AMERICA** internet message board written by Frank Hamill in response to a Spoonplugger who has had problems locating schools of fish after hooking one in 12-20 feet of water on the troll and then casting.*

For those who don't know Frank, he is one of the most interesting Spoonpluggers we know. I've always had a picture of him as a little kid with crayons and a coloring book. He would be the one kid who's only mildly interested in coloring within the lines as we are taught. You may not agree with everything he has to say, but after talking or reading what he says you can always count on one thing....a sleepless night thinking about what he said! He's still coloring outside the lines today.

Message: 12/30/2004

I don't know what type or types of water you fish in but I have fished all over the country and 98% was with Spoonplugs and Spoonplugging. Here is some short thoughts and they are personal thoughts.

I never figured to find a school of adult bass in 20 foot of water. I have always figured adult bass that 20 foot deep would be a very, very, very shallow migration that would happen on a few times a year. If I caught a single bass in 20 feet of water I figured he or she was one of the smaller fish of the group that did not stay tight with the group and if I started fishing there where it was caught then that was the upper most limit of where the rest would be. Personally that was a good clue to the bigger fish were deeper and could be having a activity period. Staying there in the 20 foot water would generally be a waste of time as I was fishing over them.

Now if in a natural lake and the lake was 25 feet deep and I caught bass (single) in 20 feet deep then he or she was a straggler or was for sure the starting of a movement. However I generally got real excited because I knew the adult fish were no deeper than 25 feet deep and could not escape me. I figure I had them surrounded and they could not escape my Spoonplug. If in a deeper water and clearer water I figured that I would have to drop to at least 34 feet deep and most of the time deeper. The first atmosphere is at 10 to 12 feet deep and then second at 34 to 36 and the third at 64 to 66 feet deep. Adult bass that have there gas bladder adjusted for the second atmosphere cannot go to 20 feet without discomfort to their bladder so more than likely this is a single fish that has not been doing what the mass is doing. Now a group of bass of 1 to 3 pounds that you get into at 20 feet deep means the adults are within eye sight of these middle size fish but not compatible.

Guess I had better hush as I will write a book and you had a simple question. Basically, if I can say this without you taking it the wrong way...please forgive me for this opinion...you just need to understand bass a bit better, need just a bit more education on the makings of a bass and need some more experience in deep water. Mr. Perry has always stated that if asked "Where are the bass in this lake?"...he would state " Where conditions are stable"....I personally have not seen a lake where 20 of water is considered stable. Light penetration in even colored water is below 20 feet deep.

Frank Hamill

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



Next Year

At the end of every season we should think about what things we have learned and how we can improve. Think about where you are weak and work on improving that part of your fishing. There are lots of questions that you could ask of yourself. Did I map out and draw structure situations to help understand what is there and how best to present lures? Did I use markers enough so that my trolling passes are the right ones that catch the fish? Did I get shoreline sightings before I left the spots so that I don't waste time on the next trip? Did I write them down? Do I understand why the fish was on a particular spot? Where are they when they are not on this spot? Did I fish deep enough or shallow enough last year? Did I not strain the water on a particular area and did I miss the fish that day? Did I pay enough attention to water color this year? Did my catches suffer because I didn't?

We could go on forever but what is truly important is that you see where you are in your fishing and try to improve every season.

*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:

Whenever the movement occurs, early or late, in the middle of the day or night it does not necessarily mean that any two movements will be for the same distance or for the same length of time. How far the fish go and how long they stay is controlled by the weather and water conditions at that particular time. No matter how many times, or periods, we go fishing, we are not likely to find the same conditions twice.

When migration occurs, the fish move up these structures, using the bottom features as their guide. If conditions are good, they move up to the eight to ten foot depth. If conditions are very good, some will then scatter into the shallows. When fish scatter into the shallows along the shoreline, the fisherman becomes aware of it, as this is the time he says, “The fish are biting.”

At certain times of the year, spring mostly, the fish may remain for some time in the shallows, and they may move as far as the bays, coves, flats, etc. However, most of the season they are in the shallows in quantity for only a short period of time, and the distance they scatter will not be very great; thus, the productive shoreline can be very short.

The first fish to appear in the shallows will be the smaller “yearling” fish. If yearling bass are caught in the shallows this usually means a movement, and the larger fish could be at a reachable depth, on structure, in the near area.

Usually, though, the migration of the larger fish does not extend quite to or past the scatter point (eight to ten feet). This is particularly true if the school contains the biggest bass found in the waters of the area.

Never expect this entire school of large fish to move into the shallows and scatter at the same time. In all of our fishing, we have never seen more than two or three move in at one time. You have probably fished the shoreline at some time and found the bass really biting. But how many **big** fish did you catch? The reason you caught only a few, or none, perhaps was not due to any fault of yours, nor was it due to the fact that these large fish were wise “ole birds.” It was due to the fact the fish were not there.

North or south, some fish live longer, grow faster, and obtain a final weight above the average, but normally largemouth bass will die off by the time they reach six pounds. In most areas of the country, the average life span in relation to the average growing rate will **normally produce some schools whose average weight is slightly under six pounds**. But whatever the average final weight, if any “lunkers” exist in the area, they will be with this group. A group (or school) could be all one size (2 lbs., 3 lbs., 4 lbs., etc.) or the school could contain several sizes.

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