



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER



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The last meeting was held April 18, 2005 at the Kendallville Public Library with 23 members and guests present.

President Denny Coulardot reported that the bass are goin'! He has been fishing nearly every day and had been catching good numbers of bass. John Bales also reported catching up to 60-70 bass in at least one outing. Most in the 3 lb size. They are being caught both trolling and casting depending on the conditions. It's been lousy weather lately (it spit snow in Fremont today 5/2/05) after that nice warm spell, but the weather is definitely due to warm up soon and it won't be long until the water in the shallows warms to the point that the bass will be on their beds. The lake temperatures were in the 60's before the latest cold snap. After the spawn we usually get a long dry spell time while the post-spawners move to the deeper waters to recover. They usually don't stick their heads up again to any extent until the waters warm to the deeper depths and they get more active and stay active until ice-up.... Depending on weather and water conditions, of course.

Soooooo....now is the time to get in on the action before the spawning begins.

We are fortunate that we have other species to fish while the bass recover. The muskies are beginning to show up (see next page for the proof) and also, it won't be long before the northerns will begin to get frisky. Denny says the third week in June has always been a good week to take off work and find the northerns going.

Denny reported talking to NIS member D.J. Erdly

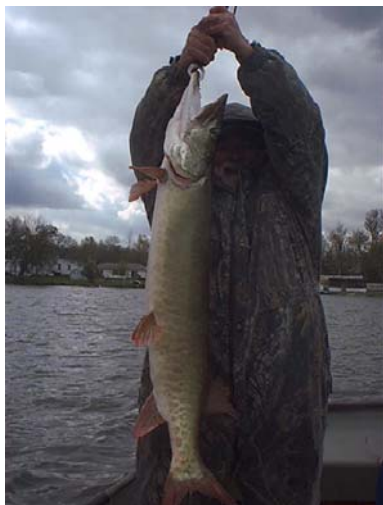
who recently stopped chasing women long enough to help the DNR with their annual muskie trapping and tagging program. D.J. confirmed they trapped over 500 muskies on Lake Webster. The nets are placed in 5-7 feet of water. Some of the nets got tore up pretty badly so there is a good chance they had some monsters that got away. The trappings are used to harvest eggs and melt for the Indiana stocking program.

John Bales drew some structure situations on an overhead projector and illustrated the importance of keeping the Spoonplug bumping bottom if possible and the importance of learning to get the lure as close to the bottom as possible if bumping bottom is not possible due to bottom conditions. Randy Ireland also drew a map of a structure situation he encountered on a local lake that does not show up accurately on a map of the lake. Brodie Allred and Mike Whirrett offered to bring maps of structure situations for next month's meeting which is:

NEXT MEETING: Kendallville Public Library May 16, 2005 6:30 P.M. We will take up a small donation to help with the building project for the NEW Kendallville Public Library.

CONGRATULATIONS To John & Deb Bales who recently became Grandpa and Grandma when daughter Jill came through with an 8 lbs. baby girl. They think she might be a "keeper"!!

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Denny Coulardot with a fat 45 inch early-season muskie



Denny with an emergency back-up muskie



Charlie Krause with one a many bass boated on this outing.

DNR says muskies plentiful in Kosciusko's Lake Webster

The Journal Gazette

Anglers claiming that Lake Webster in Kosciusko County is among the best muskie fishing lakes in the Midwest now have official numbers to back their boast.

Fish surveys conducted by the Department of Natural Resources this spring show the 774-acre lake contains more than 5,000 adult muskellunge.

A fair number of the trapped fish were more than 50 inches long.

"That's way more muskies than we originally thought were out there," DNR fisheries biologist Jed Pearson said.

Pearson and his crew recently completed a three-week project trapping and tagging at Lake Webster to capture sexually ripe male and female muskies for the state's stocking program, to estimate the density of adult muskies, and to examine the fish's long-term survival and growth rates.

The biologists caught 951 muskies at 13 different trapping sites. One trap in the northwest corner of the lake caught 299 muskies, and another trap in the northeast corner caught 210 muskies.

Clipping from the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette detailing the project D. J. Erdly worked on

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Good Spoonplugging



By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor

Each and every time we go fishing we are constantly making observations. All questions that we have are being answered by the process of eliminating the unproductive waters to arrive at the fish for that particular day.

Many questions should go through your mind each and every day that we are on the water. How is the water color? How deep are the weeds? What are the weather conditions at this particular time? What have they been the last few days? Am I fishing pre-frontal conditions or post frontal conditions?

Am I controlling my lures in such a manner that all depths and speeds are being covered? Have I missed anything? Do I know what is here for sure? Do I know the size and shape of this bar? Where is the longest, sharpest break to the deepest water? Is this the contact point? How did I accomplish this to know the shape of this bar? Can I troll this bar correctly with just one marker? Should I get a shoreline sighting and write it down? Did I make enough trolling passes to cover this bar good enough that there is no reason to believe that there are any fish there at this time? Should I anchor the boat and fan cast with different lures to check out the slower speeds? What if I go through all the trolling with no results and then anchor and catch a few fish on a jig? What questions will go through my mind if that happens? What if I don't catch any fish on a jig but put a live worm on a hook and catch some fish? What will I think then?

Was I paying attention to what the lure was telling me when it was bouncing on the bottom? Could I tell someone where the soft bottoms and the hard bottoms are? Was there a certain depth where the bottoms were hard and became soft? Would that be a breakline? What would that bottom transition look like to a fish? Why do I catch a fish on the troll going in one direction and not the other? Why is it that it is always the same trolling pass that seems to catch the fish?

Have I done all I can today to control my depths and speeds to arrive at the fish? Did I start out shallow enough and end up as deep as the features go or as deep as I have confidence in myself at this time? Should I try a little deeper than I ever have before and practice running lures just in case I may have to some day? I haven't caught a fish on the troll yet. Should I anchor on a couple of known spots and do some casting? What jump type lures should I use to check out the slower speeds?

What time of the year is this? Are the bass spawning? Should I try casting the inside weedline? Do I know how to cast the inside weedline? If this was a reservoir and the fish were near spawning, where would I start to look? What will this cold front do to these fish that are on the inside weedline? Where will they be tomorrow, or the next day or the day after that? Do I fish any different this time of year? Can I catch any fish trolling in the early part of the season?

Our presentation of lures will answer all these questions that we might ask during a day of fishing and more. It is our trolling that is our teacher. If done correctly, it will answer any and all questions of what a fish does in any season, any water color, and any weather condition. The more time that you can have a lure in the water, the more questions you will get answered. The answers are all in the book already. There are many that a person will not totally understand until they are experienced.

Knowledge is the key to fishing success. Success is the key to satisfaction. It is the satisfaction or the having of success that breeds the wanting to know more. The learning never ends.

*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.

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