



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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The last meeting was held March 19, 2007 at the Kendallville Public Library with 24 members and guests present.

We welcomed a new prospective member, Sean Nickodemus of Elkhart who had heard of Spoonplugging and decided to check us out.

President Denny Coulardot reported that most all the lakes have now opened back up and the crappies are undoubtedly in the bay staging areas.

Denny also stated that the muskies should be moving shallower and as you can see from the photos on the following page, he and Mike Price have had some success in locating them on 250's and 200's.

John Bales reported on his trip to the Chicago area for the 5th annual Winter Spoonplugging Seminar sponsored by the Illinois Spoonpluggers on March 17, 2007. John reported that this event is an extremely high quality seminar. The Illinois group have a very good program that has become a worthwhile seminar for beginners and veterans alike. Each participant is asked to submit 2 questions to have answered during the seminar. John brought back a list of the questions and we went over a number of them at the meeting.

With the beginning of spring—and some of the most unstable weather of the year (I'm looking out the window at a snow squall when last week I was in a T-shirt) and everyone anxious to get back to fishing out of a boat it may be wise to re-read some of Mr. Perry's text:

BUCK SEZ: *"A fish is a creature who can adjust, or adapt, to his environment. He can adjust or adapt to changes in tem-*

perature, pressure, light, oxygen, food—you name it. None of these "changed" conditions will cause him any great discomfort. However, the adjustments are not done instantly, it takes a little time. Some fish appear to adjust faster than others, and some seem to be more sensitive to a change. This would explain "stragglers" as well as some species appearing sooner than others after a cold front. If any discomfort comes, it is when an "unstable" (constantly changing) condition occurs in his environment, and this he won't tolerate if he can get out of it. A cold-blooded fish doesn't know, nor care for that matter, that his body must adapt to a temperature change, but instinct tells him it better take place or else. I like to think he would go nuts if he had to try adjusting to things changing all the time. He would certainly seek and stay in a place where things are more stable.

Temperature changes in the water aren't too fast overall, but it's "changing" more, faster, and to a greater degree, in the shallows than in the deep. Shallow water may become rather stable at periods of the year (thank goodness!) but overall, the "stable" conditions are in deeper water.

As some of you know, "light" is one of our major guides to the movement of the fish. What is more unstable than light in the life of a fish? Sure he can adjust, in fact he has a couple ways for doing it, but it takes a little time. It is said it takes quite a few more minutes for a fish to adjust to light in one direction, than it does to adjust in the other (light to dark, or dark to light). Our eyes adjust to the changes in light rather fast, but suppose they didn't and the light kept changing? It takes little imagination to see where the light is more stable in a body of water.

If you were to ask me where the fish are at any particular time in a body of water, about the only answer I could give would be to say, "where conditions are more stable." The only reliable escape that a fish has from a "changing" environment in DEEP WATER. The deeper it is, the more stable it becomes."

NEXT MEETING: April 16, 2007 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Denny Coulardot and Mike Price with some early season muskies



“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS”



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



TROLLING IS OUR TEACHER

Why does Mr. Perry go to great lengths in trying to teach us to become a good troller? We could fill a book with all the advantages in doing so. Don Nichols, (one of the best Spoonpluggers of all time), said that when the trolling is done correctly it is an art. It is a method of fishing that requires skill and know how. Learning to become a good troller does not come in ten-easy-lessons but must be studied and practiced.

When trolling is mentioned, a lot of fishermen think of just dragging a lure behind the boat. It is also the method that they use when all else fails.

For the Spoonplugger, we know that without the trolling, the ultimate goal of catching fish on a consistent basis cannot be reached. All fishing knowledge is attained by learning how to motor troll. It is the least understood method of fishing that there is.

All Spoonpluggers must begin by learning how to troll the shallows with the first three size lures. This is everyone's starting point to becoming a good fisherman. It is the beginning of the learning process. It is the trolling water that leads us to the fishing water!

Trolling is a constant reminder of depth and speed control. With each size lure, we keep that lure in the proper depth while controlling our speeds with the throttle. Slower in cold water and faster as the water warms, but always checking the different speeds. A lot of fishermen do not understand the importance of speed control. Like a lot of things this must be experienced before it is fully understood.

My time is very important to me so I do not want to waste too much of it wondering what the fish are doing when I want to catch them. Motor trolling will tell me in short order what the fish are doing at the time and place that we are fishing. While constantly checking out our depths and speeds, we will very likely know when the fish become active and for sure where!

Motor trolling offers us a control in many fishing conditions that cannot be duplicated by casting. On many days, the only fish that can be caught will come on the troll, even when many casting positions are taken after getting a fish on the troll.

While keeping lures in position, a lot can be learned. ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THE LURES ARE TELLING YOU! Are the bottoms hard or soft? Is there moss or weeds and at what depth do the weeds seem to end? There is a lot to be learned while keeping each size lure in position and fishing.

Motor trolling will tell us what, where, why and how to go about the rest of our fishing. It TRULY IS OUR TEACHER!

*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:

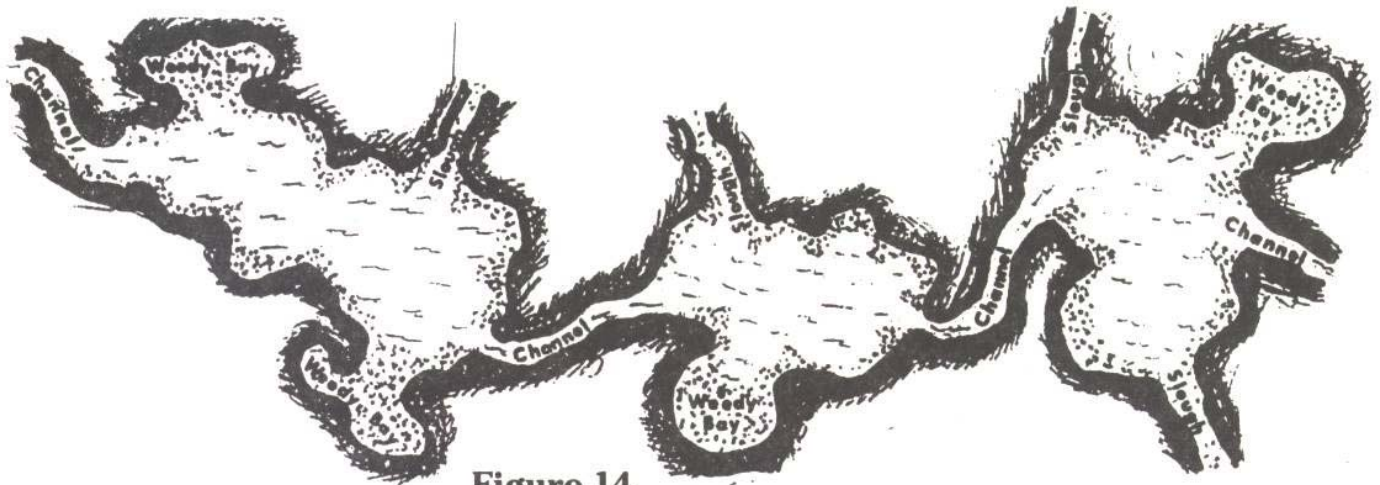


Figure 14

When viewing northern pike from a seasonal standpoint, there are things worthy of note. The pre-spawning or spawning period will find northern in the weedy bays and sloughs. Figure 14 shows a “chain” or series of lakes. The weedy bays and sloughs are noted. The northern will spawn earlier than most fish in the lake. **After spawning, the main structures and breaklines in the lake would be worked as with any other species.**

Another thought concerning northern in a series of lakes such as this is their apparent mass movement from one lake to another during the warmer part of the season. Large concentrations of big northern may show up in a lake during a certain period and fishing can be terrific for a week or more. Then the action slows in this particular lake, and the fish start showing up in the lake above, and later on in the lake above that one, and so on. When in a given area, these fish will use the structures present. Apparently, they make the return journey—as the next season, the movements starts all over again in the same lake at approximately the same period.

Fishermen who fish primarily for this species, and who fish water of this nature (Lake chain) would be wise to study this yearly migration fully. A definite pattern of date periods may not be possible, as the migration would be controlled by the weather and water conditions that exist, and very few years would be the same. But a good enough pattern could be secured to keep the fisherman in the most likely spots.

Many fishermen consider the northern pike a cold water fish. This is true, to a certain extent, as he is active in colder water, often being the target of the “ice fisherman.” But, it would be well to note, the best action occurs during the hottest periods of the year. Casting for northern can be effective, especially when they are in the shallows. But, to consistently catch BIG northern in numbers, trolling the deeper weedlines, breaklines, and drop-offs with appropriate lures is the way to go for most of the season.

When thinking of muskie, we change our view very little from that of the northern. Except in certain reservoirs, the shallower headwater sections will be prime spawning areas. After the water warms, they move back to the deeper sections. In the case of muskie, his deepwater sanctuary may be much deeper—and as he gets larger, he becomes more reluctant to move to shallow waters. His migration will be shorter and for less time. Where bass may have their “shallow” deepwater sanctuary, in 30-35 feet of water, muskie at the same time may have his at 45-55 feet if available. Big muskie are very reluctant to move shallow except during spawning period. After spawning, big muskie in the shallows become few and far between. If a particular lake had several deep holes with different depths, the muskie fisherman should concentrate his efforts around the deepest one for most of the season. Here again, lures trolled at deep breaklines will shoot to pieces the myth that muskies are difficult to catch.

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