



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 1

#147

**FOUNDED 1991**

January 2007

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The last meeting was held December 18, 2006 at the Kendallville Public Library with 14 members present.

President Denny Coulardot reported that the muskies are still active, however, you'd be bumping the bottom if you plan to be successful..

John Bales reported that he had caught approximately 120 bass in the previous 2 weekends, so obviously, the bass are active also. He also reported catching a 2 lb. perch on a recent fishing trip.

John and Denny went bass fishing the previous week and John wore Denny plum out! A discussion erupted on John's defensive moves to block out his fishing partner once the fish are located. Denny's offensive moves include just throwing right over the top of him, but Dan Luley stated that once you've solved that problem, a new one is created when you get a fish to the boat. John's favorite trick is to net the fish while shaking and rolling the net in order to get as many hooks tangled as possible so that it takes an hour to retrieve your lure and throw the fish back. This discussion was actually all in fun. It is a well known fact in the Bales boat that if one partner catches a fish, the other partner better be casting to the same spot ASAP in order to keep a school of fish in a frenzy. Keeping the fish active with two lures rather than one doubles the potential catch from the active school. It's just that John does seem to somehow end up with the lion's share of the catch.

Denny's totals for the year are now 468 northern and 91 muskies. 37 muskies just since Thanksgiving. Bass aren't being counted.

John gave a short talk on a lake he recently fished. It is very clear. In almost all of our natural lakes, the premium breakline is the base of the weedline. It is typically the most well defined and therefore the easiest for the fish as well as the Spoonplugger to locate. In this particular lake is so clear that if you were to spend most of your time at the base of the weedline, you'd have a lot of miserable days. There are deeper breaklines that are much more productive because of the water color involved. This is a very good lesson. Sometimes we spend a lot of time fishing where they ain't because they "ought" to be where we are fishing. Many times the fish are just ornery and refuse to be where you tell them to be. A good Spoonplugger will not spend a lot of time fishing in what appears to be unproductive waters. A good Spoonplugger will fish an area he knows should be productive and if he doesn't catch anything, he will reason that the fish weren't there or he would have caught them. Spoonplugging guidelines also tell us that most of the time we may not be fishing deep enough. And this is especially true in lakes that do not have good water color.

Happy New Year. It's 2007 and guess what? Dues are due! A book of stamps if you please. Thanks.

**NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 15, 2007, AT  
THE KENDALLVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
6:30 P. M.**

**"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"**



Mike and Linda Price above and Denny Coulardot below with some late 2006 season muskies



**“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS”**



# Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



When Mr. Perry wrote the green book and the home study series, he published fishing facts that were true and correct at that time and they remain just as valid today. The answer to every fishing question that you will ever have can be found somewhere in these writings. There are some subjects that are repeated many times and some that are not. However, it is up to us to study and believe that everything that has been written is true. The more experience that a fisherman is able to gain, the better he will be able to reexamine the material and see that what he has experienced has been written about. Every subject that is important for us to be successful is covered. When I talk about success, I am speaking about becoming as good a fisherman as you want to be. The amount of success that a person can attain is endless. There are no two bodies of water that are the same. There are no two structure situations that are alike. Although they may be different, we fish them all in the same manner.

Let's look at just a couple of guidelines that Mr. Perry wrote: " If you are not catching fish, you are not fishing deep enough". What does this mean to you? What if we are fishing a lake with good water color and we have gone through all the lure sizes and have not touched a fish? We have fished as shallow as we could and as deep as the breaklines go and/or as deep as our confidence has let us. What options do we have now? We can do a lot of things but if we have fished it properly and have not caught a fish, then we have to believe that the fish have not become active yet. We can start the process over on the same spot or if you are like me, you might rather find another spot and go through the process of eliminating the unproductive water there. On a normal fishing day, the fish will become active and may move towards the shallows once or twice a day. Most people may not realize that of a ten hour day on the water, we are actually catching fish once or twice a day for a period of about fifteen minutes to a half an hour for each movement that occurs.

Back to the guidelines. An experienced Spoonplugger knows that if all depths and speeds are checked and the fish are not found, then he has done all that can be done. This is understood. Some weather and water conditions will test our patience while waiting for the fish to become active but we must not deviate from our guidelines of trolling and casting for checking our depths and speeds. Sticking to these guidelines is the only way that we can learn how fish movements are related to weather and water conditions. We constantly watch the weather. We never vary from our guidelines and when the fish move, we are aware of it and take full advantage when it does happen.

" The home of the fish is in deep water". " The older and bigger a fish becomes, the more reluctant he is to move towards the shallows". " When a school of adult fish get up to around ten feet, they might say: "Stop, we are getting too shallow". " If I could pick a good depth that would get a good migration of adult fish, it would be around 14 to 17 feet in depth".

I put these all together because they all point out that if you and I are going to get into some large fish, we are going to have to check a little deeper sometimes. Do not overlook or fail to take seriously these as well as the many other guidelines. They will lead us to the fish and allow us to gain fishing knowledge.

*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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