



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 3

#149

FOUNDED 1991

March 2007

PRESIDENT/FOUNDER: Denny Coulardot
(260) 691-3118

SECRETARY: Ted Walter
(260) 495-5042

EDUCATION DIRECTOR: John Bales
(260) 854-3921

The last meeting was held February 19, 2007 at the Kendallville Public Library with 22 members and guests present. We welcomed Phillip and Susan Mohr of Middlepoint, Ohio. They have a place on Skinner Lake and were interested in additional information on their lake. We also welcomed Dallas Boatright (how's that for an appropriate Spoonplugger name?) and his son of New Haven, Indiana. It was noted that the Kendallville Library will be closed during our regularly scheduled May meeting as they will be moving to their new facility near Bixler Lake. It was decided to hold the May meeting a week earlier, May 14, 2007 instead of May 21st.

Last month all the fishing reports involved boats and open water conditions. What a difference a month makes! There were a few fishing reports, all involving hard water conditions with several people reporting good catches of panfish.

The BIG story was Mike Whirrett's largemouth catch. Mike, faced with only a 6 inch opening in the ice, was able to land a 24 inch largemouth. The scales available on the ice recorded the fish at 8 lbs 11 oz., however, when it was weighed at the taxidermist that evening, it weighed

in at 9 lbs. 13 oz! This will make the second 8 lb plus Indiana bass hanging on Mike's wall.

John Bales' education portion of the meeting focused on encouraging members to explore more and different waters this year.

John pointed out the advantages of learning new waters in sharpening a Spoonplugger's skills. By fishing several new waters each year, our ability to map and interpret those waters will enhance and refine our interpretation of the waters we may already think we have in our hip pocket.

John suggested the St Joseph River, beginning near Centerville, Michigan and running all the way to South Bend as a great way to learn river systems. This stretch of river has numerous dams along the way and you can easily spend a day going over each section. Most sections have good structure situations along with deeper holes on the outside bends of the channel that have plenty of fish. Usually the beginning and the end of the holes are the keys to where the fish will be.



NEXT MEETING:
March 19, 2007 at the
Kendallville Public Library
6:30 P.M.

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"

Photo Tips

The following is a reprint of tips I received on-line several years ago from Spoonpluggers concerning photographing fish for our newsletters. I got back some great suggestions. Many of the same tips came from different people, so I have tried to condense them into what you see below:

Always try to take the picture of your subject with the sun in their face (and to your back, being mindful of your own shadow!) This gives you full advantage of the natural light. You can lose color and detail by shooting the photo into the sun.

ALWAYS-ALWAYS-ALWAYS USE A FLASH. By using a flash, even in bright daylight, you will enhance the colors and remove shadows from the subjects face.

LOSE THE SUNGLASSES. Sunglasses are important to save your eyes from ultraviolet light, but they do nothing for making a good fish picture. Have your subject tilt their cap or hat back if they must keep it on in order to not throw a shadow on the eyes/forehead. The eyes tell a whole lot about the person's mood and they may have just caught that fish-of-a-lifetime. You want to let their eyes and smiles tell the story.

Take the time to compose your shot, if possible. Put the fish in the livewell for the moment and plan the shot. (Unless you are keeping the fish. (This may not apply to muskies or northerns or other species that might experience greatly reduced odds for survival the longer they remain out of water) Remember, you cannot duplicate the effort afterwards if you realize you did not get a good photo.

Frame your shot before you retrieve the fish from the livewell and rehearse with your subject how you plan to shoot the picture. Look for a photo-enhancing backdrop. Look through the camera viewer and beware of the background. Scan what's in back of the subject; power lines, trees that might appear to poke out of the subject's head, jet trails, etc. You don't want anything to detract from the fish or the fisherman/woman.

Most of us shoot too far away! Fill the view-finder with your subject and the fish. We don't often care what kind of boots or shoes they're wearing!

Take time to check that shirts are on and buttoned. Get rid of cigarettes, soft drink cans, etc!

Check the settings on your camera and make certain you are ready. OK, time to take the pictures. Get the fish and get the subject back in place as rehearsed. Have the subject hold the fish up and look at the fish, NOT at the photographer. You probably won't have to remind him/her to smile, but it's tradition!

DON'T-DO NOT-EVER-EVER HOLD THE FISH OUT AT ARM'S LENGTH FROM YOUR BODY. First off, it does not fool anybody. Second, it looks silly. You can hold the fish approximately 1/3 of your arm length away from your body without looking silly. Remember, the hand holding the fish gives the size away every time

As a picture taker, you can stoop down lower than your subject or have the subject stand on the casting deck. By shooting the picture at a *slightly upward angle*, you increase the focal plane (makes the fish LOOK longer, without calling the viewer's attention to the 'trick' you're playing.) Be careful, *be very careful*, you can have TOO much of an angle which will end up looking silly again! Make certain your camera is level with the background.

Move quickly, but carefully and take several pictures. The odds of getting a good one increase by doing so. You're only going to get this one chance with that fish. Make the most of it. It's better to err on the side of extra copies than to not have any good pictures.

This is almost cheating, but it makes a great picture so I'll include it. When you catch a medium-size fish, 3-4-5 pound bass or 10-15 pound northern, have a child hold the fish. Makes the fish look gigantic!

Lastly, let's assume that you catch a possible World, State, Line Class "RECORD FISH". There are some very specific steps you need to take:

DON'T SUBMIT THE PHOTOS AT THE ANGLES ALLUDED TO ABOVE! OFFICIALS WILL NOT BE IMPRESSED! DO FOLLOW THE OTHER GUIDELINES AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE ROD AND THE LURE YOU CAUGHT THE FISH ON IN THE PHOTO.

CUT OFF APPROXIMATELY 10 FEET OF LINE TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR APPLICATION.

BE SURE TO GET AS MANY WITNESSES AS YOU CAN TO THE CATCHING AND THE WEIGHING OF THE FISH.

BE SURE TO WEIGH THE FISH ON A "STATE CERTIFIED" SCALE AND GET THE OWNER/EMPLOYEE'S HOME INFORMATION ALONG WITH THE BUSINESS'S INFORMATION.

BE SURE TO GET THE STATE CERTIFICATION NUMBER FROM THE SCALES.

WEIGH THE FISH ONCE AND ONLY ONCE.

Many record fish have been disallowed for not following these guidelines.

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



We all get in a hurry to get the boat in the water the instant that the ice is gone. Well, at least some of us. Some thoughts about early season fishing should be considered before rushing out there and hoping that the fish will be biting.

The water temperatures will be somewhere in the high 30's when the ice comes off. The metabolism of the fish will be on the slow side and the fish movements towards the shallows will be non existent or little to none. Weather and water conditions control the movements of the fish in all seasons so the time to expect some fish movements towards the shallows would be a stable warming trend. Until that happens, we should be aware of where the deeper holes are and have some fishing knowledge of how and where to spend our time in the best places to catch a fish. A lot of our early season will be spent casting jump-type lures in and around the deeper sections of the lake. This knowledge of where to cast will come from experience in trolling the deeper holes throughout all of the fishing seasons. This will tell you where to spend your time when casting.

Although a lot of time is spent casting jump-type lures in the early part of the season, do not rule out trolling. Especially on the lakes with a shallow or no weedline. On these lakes with color, most would be considered shallow and they will warm up quicker and show some fish movements towards the shallows a little sooner than the deeper ones. Do not rule out the first three sizes of Spoonplugs on these type lakes in the early season. The fish that do move shallower are no problem to catch because they will be active enough to take a trolled lure. Keep the speeds on the slow side early in the season but don't be afraid to pick up the pace if the slow speeds are not producing. You would be surprised at how fast a fish can take a lure, even in the colder water when conditions are stable. You just have to check it out.

The early season can be a frustrating time of the year. One day can be feast and the next be nothing. The weather can be very unstable at this time of the year and this is why we get such limited fish movements for this time of year. It is still using Mr. Perry's guidelines. The more stable the weather and water, the better fish movements. The less stable, the less fish movements. It doesn't matter what time of the year it is, the fish movements are still controlled by the weather and water conditions.

You always want to be prepared for whatever conditions you may be faced with. Have a variety of different weights of jump-type lures and styles and be prepared to cast or troll. The worse thing that you can do is try to tell a fish where he has to be. We fail most of the time when we do this.

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:

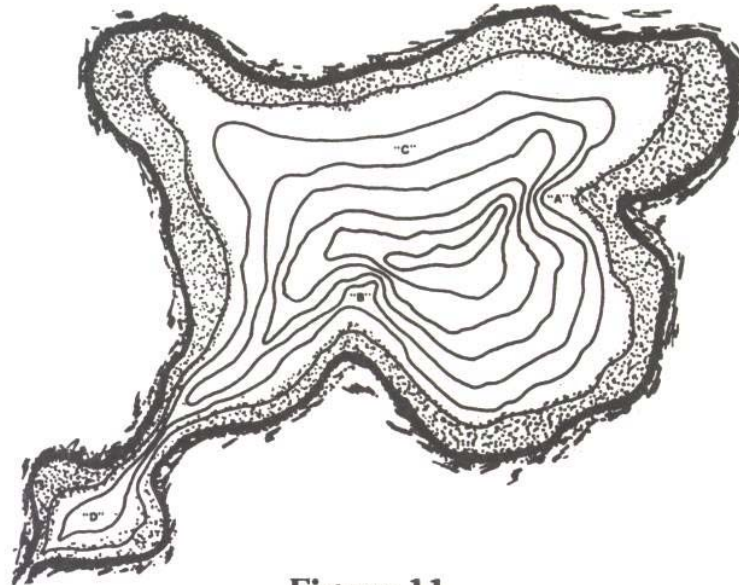


Figure 11

Figure 11 is a top view of a **natural** lake, and it contains a variety of fish—bass, walleye, northern pike, etc. When viewing the migration of fish from a **SEASONAL** point of view, it is somewhat different from that found in reservoirs. This does not imply the habits and instincts of fish are different, but in most natural lakes the **STRUCTURES USED DO NOT CHANGE, BUT WILL REMAIN THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE SEASON**. However, if by chance your natural lake has the same features as discussed in the reservoir—short structure—steep shorelines, etc., then the same principle would apply. Those natural lakes with a stream flowing through, such as a lake chain and some wider sections of streams at times called lakes, often have features as found in reservoirs.

Figure 11 shows the contour and structure available in a natural lake. Added to this is a shallow channel or slough leading off to a small expanse of water. This could be a small shallow lake connected to the main lake by a narrow channel. The deepest water in the lake is a large section in the center of the larger body of water. This would be the home of the fish (winter or summer). In studying the structure available, there are two main structures in the form of a bar (A & B). The section marked “C” has no well-defined structure, breakline, nor breaks. It is a flat, sloping bottom. The **breaklines** that occur on structures A and B are the only “steep” bottoms available. Thus they would be the **shortest** route to shallower water for limited or scattered migrations—just like the steeper sections of a reservoir. These would give the fish an immediate drop-back or access to the **deepest** water. So, in early season, and pre-spawn season, these steeper sections of the structure would be used.

As the pre-spawn season approaches, it is highly probable that in certain weather and water conditions, some fish may migrate for short periods into the feeder channel leading to the backwaters of the slough or small shallow lake. The possibility of this would increase as the spawning season approaches.

In the overall picture, the two main structures (A & B) would be considered as the main migration routes for both cold and warm seasons. In the colder pre-spawn period, the deeper breaks and breaklines would receive the **SHORT, SCATTERED, UNPREDICTABLE** migrations. As the season progresses, the movements should become better and better and be more to the shallow portions of the structures. During the spawning season, the most productive shallow places in the lake should be in the near shallows of those two main structures. If the lake has a slough or a small channel leading off into a bay, or a small section such as “D”, then this too should be checked. After the spawning season, the same main structures (A & B) would receive the migration as per weather and water conditions that exist.

“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS”