



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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The last meeting was held November 17, 2008 at the Kendallville Public Library with 11 members present. Snowy and icy conditions with lots of weather related auto accidents...it's no wonder attendance was low!

President Denny reported that speeds are dead slow and that the lakes have all "turned over". He reported that typically muskies can be caught on the troll right up to ice-up, but the bass get slower and slower as their metabolisms gear down for the winter. Casting mapped positions offer the best chance for bass and slower casting speeds are often called for. Cold-front conditions may even call for spinning rigs with lighter jump-type lures.

Denny also attended a meeting recently with area DNR fish biologist, Jed Pearson. Jed reported stockings in area lakes of 5 muskies per acre in Loon and Skinner Lakes and 1 per acre in Lake Tippecanoe. They also discussed raising the size limit on muskies in Webster Lake and the possibility of stocking Everett.

With speeds being so slow just prior to ice-up, John Bales pointed out the importance of casting positions for late fall/early winter fishing. He described the proper procedures for casting positions.

As a structure situation is mapped, the base of the weedline is noted. By positioning the boat in such a fashion that the cast is made beyond the base of the weedline a jump-type lure is retrieved or hopped into the base of the weedline. Most strikes will occur at or near the weedline. For instance, if the base of the weedline is 14-18 feet deep, the boat should be positioned in the shallows in order for the cast to reach

beyond the weedline, jumped into the weedline and is retrieved at about a 45 degree angle so that the lure hits only a minimal amount of weeds prior to its coming off the bottom and back to the boat. Adjustments will need to be made according to the depth of the base of the weedline, but it should take only a few casts to determine the proper depths in the shallows to keep the boat, whether you are anchored, using a trolling motor, or using the outboard to keep the boat in position by taking it in or out of gear. With each cast, you should count the lure down so that you can determine the depth the lure is hitting. If you are consistently getting a 15 count and suddenly you get an 18 count, you know that something happened. By always counting down the lure, you will always be aware of depth changes as you move around the structure.

If no fish are caught, you may assume that the fish are deeper and you will need to adjust accordingly. You may be able to position the boat in a little deeper water, thereby increasing the depth reached on the cast. However, your lure will leave the bottom at greater angle, until you are basically vertical jigging. And at times, vertical jigging is exactly what is called for.

The whole idea is the very same as for motor trolling: **By keeping your lure in the proper position for as much of the time as possible, your chances of catching a fish is greatly improved.**

NEXT MEETING: December 15, 2008 at the Kendallville Public Library. 6:30 P.M.

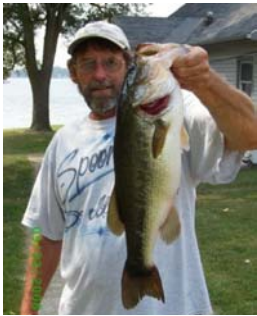
"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



John Bales with a nice northern and catfish from area lakes



Debbie and John Bales with some extra nice largemouths



Mike and Mark Brown display some hefty Lake Erie smallmouths



John demonstrates that not all Lake Erie smallmouths are giants!



John with a nice stringer of "pretty" walleyes.



Just another Spoonplugger making a straight-line pass!

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



It happens at the end of every season of fishing. You begin to see the ice form on the lakes. You know it is coming but you do not look forward to it. Three months of not being able to launch the boat and take out your frustrations in life with the sport that we so love to do. There is another way to look at it without the depression setting in. And that is to look at this past season and weigh what you and I have learned to see if we have gotten better.

One thing that makes my year a success is to look at several of our new members and see how they have grown as fishermen. A good feeling is had when over a season or two, you get to see those that had no clue to begin with begin catching fish as never before. A son taking out his 80 year old father and getting into a bunch of northern pike. A fellow member took out a 79 year old lady from his church and she caught several northern pike up to 36 inches. The same feeling is had when I see a young man holding up a 53 inch musky which he caught while fishing with his dad who is another Spoonplugger. A congratulation goes out to every one of you who shared a bit of your Spoonplugging knowledge.

We, as Spoonpluggers are at the bottom of the fishing world. We should be at the top! Mr. Perry taught us to share and we do just that. Let's face it, we cannot compete with what the average fisherman watches on television. I like watching people catch fish on the TV also. The trouble with most of it is that what the people see, they believe to be true. All of the credit in most cases is given to the lure that is being used. Millions are sold and a lot of money is made and then the next miracle lure comes out and it starts all over again.

We as Spoonpluggers were given guidelines to follow. This is the big difference between them and us. We know how fish react to weather and water and what you and I must do to catch him. They do not! But we cannot criticize them for not knowing.

With the slowing economy, there is not a better time to promote Spoonplugging. At the end of the Spoonplugging show, we could hold up our catch which will feed our family for several meals. We could then show us pulling up to the gas pumps and fill up our tank with the one or two gallons of gasoline that we used for the 8 hour day. How does this compare to the 30 or 40 gallons of gas that it takes to fill up the high powered bass boat for a day of running all over the lake? How about the comparing of the fish catching and the feeding of our family for an enjoyable day on the water? Just some thoughts about the future.

I did learn a lot this fall. I learned that with not having a job, I had an opportunity to fish a lot more often and chose my days. I soon realized that the weekend fisherman does not have a chance to hit it exactly right very often. It became obvious that if this is what retirement is all about, I sure hope that the wife and I can live long enough to enjoy it.

Make sure that you do a lot of studying on the Green Book and the 9 Volume Home Study Series this winter. That is your knowledge that you take with you every day that you are on the water. It is all there for you! Everything that you need to know is in these books. Each time that you study them, you will be amazed at what you may have missed or looked over. There is a lot that will not be understood until you have experienced it. Once you have experienced these things, you will go over them with new meaning. It is always a never ending learning process for all of us.

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:

.....Another thing which might be mentioned is the problem encountered after you reach the 15 foot depth. The amount of line used, the type of line used, or the lure types used to reach depths below this 15 feet will separate the men from the boys. It becomes increasingly more difficult to have control beyond this depth. The “feel” starts to disappear, interpretation becomes harder—fishing in general just becomes more difficult and tiring. **To cap all this**, as depth increases, the fisherman has to become **more exact**. Fish react to depth in such a way that they are more difficult to catch and more exact presentation must be made in order to make them take. **BUT**, you must not pass up this deep water trolling just because it is difficult. Working this water or trying to place your lures correctly in this water, is the finest **teacher** around. It may take some time for you to become **exact**, but it will be well worth your effort.

If I appear to have put a lot of emphasis on trolling, you are right. In my opinion it takes far more skill to become a good troller that it does to become a good caster. For generations fishermen have been instructed in the proper procedure for casting, but never on trolling. There is a definite purpose for every trolling maneuver. And in the final analysis, **it is trolling that will tell you where, when, why, and how to cast. I can’t say the same for casting.**

Trolling will be a constant reminder of DEPTH and SPEED control—**casting will not**. If you limit yourself to casting, or overdo it, pretty soon you will be putting faith in the size, color, and action of your lures, rather than in Depth and Speed control. You can put this in your pipe and smoke it, because it will happen.

Trolling will also: more quickly eliminate unproductive water, greatly facilitates and shortens the time of mapping and interpretation, allows a greater area to be covered to find fish, produces more ‘straggler’ (Remember these fish are important on those days which produce little or no movement), allows more varied and better speed and depth control. Competes with modern day traffic, makes fishing a family sport, no casting skill is needed, allows the use of lure weights and sizes which may not be usable with the available casting rig—plus many more.

While Spoonpluggers are taught the importance of trolling, this does not rule out casting by any means. **If you want to become a good fisherman you must be in a position to do BOTH in a sane and intelligent manner.**

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