



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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Happy 2008. The last meeting was held December 17, 2007 at the Kendallville Public Library with 14 members present.

Fishing Reports: As of the meeting date, a few lakes remained open or at least partially open and as a result good numbers of fish were reported being caught. Several reports of 50-75 bass a day were mentioned from area lakes.

Denny Coulardot stated that the muskies were still going IF you were able to get in. That situation has since changed.....unless you mount chainsaws on each side of your boat!

There were a few reports of big perch and bluegills being caught as well.

I have had a few reports since the meeting that both bass and bluegills are being caught through the ice. I have also heard of several good northerns being caught on tip-ups. Several lakes in my neck of the woods still have open areas over deep water holes so keep that in mind if you are venturing out! I can tell you from experience that a dip in the lake at this time of year is much less satisfying than you might think! It was reported that Bobby Meredith, who experienced a nasty fall in November resulting in a great deal of neck and vertebrae damage, has had his "halo" removed and is feeling much better.

Denny and John Bales commented on their experience of fishing nearby Michigan lakes as compared with Indiana lakes. They feel the bass population seems to be noticeably more robust in the Michigan lakes than in the Indiana lakes. They feel that since the Indiana and Michigan lakes are in such close proximity that the only thing that can account for the

difference is the Michigan closed season for bass during their Spring spawn, a policy which Indiana has yet to adopt.

Closed seasons are a controversial subject. There apparently is little scientific evidence that a closed season benefits the species. There is evidence that the weather plays a far more important role in survival rates of fry following spawn.... IF the weather permits a good spawn than does a closed season.

However, northern states, with a more limited growing season and shortened spawning window as compared to the southern waters, can use all the help it can get if we are to maintain quality fisheries.

With no closed season, tournaments start much earlier. This naturally brings fishermen from states with a closed season to our lakes so they can get a head start on the season. It may not increase the fishing pressure a great deal, or cause a spawn to fail all by itself. But it undoubtedly has some effect even when catch and release is strictly followed. Tournaments require that fish be weighed in and if a female is weighted and released, there is virtually no possibility of salvation of her nest once she has been removed for any length of time.

This will undoubtedly be a debatable subject for years to come, but if John and Denny's observations are valid, then a closed season should be welcomed by all anglers, including tournament fishermen.

**New year...Dues are due! (book of stamps)**

**NEXT MEETING:** January 21, 2008 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.

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



John, always looking for a short-cut, shows that catching them two-at-a-time is faster!



John Bales with some nice Lake Erie smallies



Denny Coulardot with a Lake Erie beauty (left) and a big fat walleye (right)



The Brown Brothers, joining in on the action as a good school of smallmouth is located. (the vultures!!!)



Mike Brown showing that lots of lures in the water means lots of fish in the boat!



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



# *Good Spoonplugging*

**By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor**



It looks like the end to another season of learning is among us. Spoonplugging is a never ending learning process. As our season ends, we might look at our success and failures and what we can do to improve. There are so many parts of Spoonplugging and they all play a part in our success. One of these subjects is maps. We study contour maps ahead of time so we can spend our time on the places where we have the best chance to catch a fish. In our natural lakes, we have three structure situations. A far bit less than the other fourteen that may exist in reservoirs. We have bars, humps and saddles.

Why do we need to study maps? Maps can tell us many things before we get on the water. Where are the deeper holes or slots located? Where are the structure situations located and how are they related to these deeper holes and slots? With some experience, many fishing situations can be answered even before we get on the water. A place where two contour lines come close or touch may play a roll in locating a contact point. Where a 30 foot deep contour line juts out across the lake and makes a deep flat point may be the ticket in locating the big musky late in the season. A slight turn to the left or right on a contour line at 25 feet may be where you hit the bass trolling in the late fall. All of these observations which many times can be seen on a contour map ahead of time may put you fishing in the right place, at the right time and in the right manner.

When you look at the contour lines of a map, don't just look at the total shapes of the bars and any other features. Study them! Study not only their shapes but how flat, how sharp, where many contour lines come together and so on. Don't just look, ask yourself why does this occur? Is there a river that runs through this lake? Why is there a big flat bar here? Is there a creek that comes in somewhere in this area? Can you follow the flow of the channel all the way through this lake? Where did it turn and what occurred in this area? Why is this shoreline steep and deep? What time of the year would I check this area out?

So many questions can be answered by studying your maps before you get on the water. For years, the same book of Indiana maps has been near the bathroom for study. Each and every time that a thought is made and the maps are looked at, something new is learned. Study is part of becoming a better Spoonplugger. Being able to interpret a contour map is important in getting there.

*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:**

During your fishing **you should not think of WEATHER in terms of temperature.** This does not mean changes in temperature will not affect fish, nor does it mean the fisherman doesn't change his tactics. (Later on you'll find if you present your lures and bait properly, you'll automatically take care of temperature). **YOU SHOULD VIEW WEATHER (and TEMPERATURE) IN TERMS OF LIGHT.**

With this in mind, we can now make a Spoonplugger's guideline:

**THE LIGHTER OR BRIGHTER IT IS, THE TOUGHER THE FISHING WILL BE. THE DARKER THE CONDITIONS, THE BETTER IT WILL BE.**

We have no way of knowing how many types of weather conditions might occur during a fishing season. One look at any weather map will show all types of high or low pressure areas, several kinds of “fronts,” storms, hot areas or wet or dry areas. You name it—they show it.

**We have to pick one of these conditions for a starting point.** One that we can use as a **guide** to our fishing. One that will be the **key** for determining our chances for success, and the one that will let us **plan** our tactics. In other words, we have to set us up another guideline. **This guideline is a COLD FRONT.**

It should be noted, the word COLD does not necessarily mean there is a big drop in temperature. The front is actually the dividing line between two masses of air. The difference in temperature of these two masses can vary; at times it will be great, while at others, hardly noticeable. The main difference between the two air masses is that one is warmer, holding a higher moisture content, while the other is a drier mass of cooler air. The former is usually associated with a LOW, while the latter is associated with HIGH. The masses of air which move through the United States are normally from the west to the east. This direction can vary, but for all practical purposes this is the dominant direction.

The front itself is usually associated with very rough weather, such as heavy rain, squall lines (thunder storms), etc. This is especially true when there is a great difference between the two masses of air. If the temperature difference is slight, these fronts are much less discernible.

When observing or viewing a COLD FRONT, here again, **we do not view it in terms of temperature, but instead relate it to LIGHT conditions.** There is a relationship between the light and the temperature, and if there is a great drop in temperature after a front passes, and it lasts for a long period, the light will be affected accordingly.

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