



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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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 April 21, 2008 at the Kendallville Public Library with 18 members and guests present.

Denny Coulardot reported that the muskies have spawned. The DNR began their reproductive netting on April 1st.

Crappies were spawning as of the date of the meeting and the bass will be close behind if the temperatures stay moderate. Most lakes are now in the high 50 degrees to the low 60's, so it won't be long.

Denny reported catching some muskies, but speeds are still very slow most of the time.

John and Denny have been doing very well catching crappie lately. They reminded us how fortunate we are to have the annual progression of species that are active, spawn, and later become active once again as they recover from spawning. . The progression begins with walleye and crappies commonly caught early in the season, followed by bass, then northerns (since they can spawn before or almost before ice-out), then the bass again several weeks following the spawn. This gives fisherman a species that is catchable for practically the entire open-water period. As the waters warm to the deeper depths in June/July, the fish's metabolism cranks up and all species are active until ice-up returns.

John reminded all Spoonpluggers that early in the season efforts should be concentrated where the fish will spend a greater amount of their time and not to spend too much time fishing deep water.

When a fish is caught on the cast, most Spoonpluggers know the drill of both partners casting back to the same spot in order to determine if a school of fish

exists.

Anyone who has fished with John Bales knows the difficulty in beating John to the punch since John's boat control can often put the back-seat partner at a severe disadvantage unless he or she is over 7 feet tall or have special gymnastic skills to overcome the defensive position of casting AROUND John.

Recently, Dan Luley was in the control seat when he caught a fish on the cast with John in the rear. Dan succeeded in using the defensive position to keep John out of position long enough to out-fish him. Dan denied that he used such tactics, but John verified that he had fallen victim to his own strategy and vowed to be more sharing in the future. However, we should all be aware that even a repentant sinner has a sinner's reflexes!

I'd like to remind all members that there are 3 back-to-back outings in the Midwest this summer:

Leoni Spoonpluggers Outing in Jackson, Michigan on June 11-15. Contact John Zaborney (517) 414-3596 jzaborney@sbcglobal.net

Lunker Hunter's Muskegon Lake Outing at Fisherman's Landing, July 9-13. Contact Chase Klinesteker (616) 949-8665 Ckspoonpl1@aol.com.

Northern Indiana Spoonpluggers "Buck Sez" Outing August 7-9 at Forest Ridge Campground near Columbia City, Indiana. Contact John Bales (260) 854-3921 johnspoon@embarqmail.com

Next Meeting: May 19, 2008 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"

Reprint from June 2005:

Catching fish is not as easy as it used to be. Just ask Terry O'Malley or Vic Saunders. We find ourselves having to go deeper and deeper in order to make a catch. There are many reasons for us having to do so. The zebra mussel and new septic systems around the natural lakes are just a couple of reasons that our lakes are clearing up. This forces us to fish deeper to make a catch.

All is not lost and there are decisions that we can make to off-set the clear water conditions. That one major decision can not only make fishing easier but may be the deciding factor in how many fish are caught during a whole fishing season. The key is choosing a lake with water color. You may have heard this a few hundred times in your studies and in the years of Spoonplugging articles. Here are a few things that are in our favor when we have water color.

How does the color of the water affect our ability to fish a body of water? Let's start with how the water color affects the amount of weeds in a body of water and how it may effect our presentation of lures. We may have a lake with great color and no weeds. Let's compare it to a clear water lake with a 20 foot weedline. Let's start out by actually fishing the lake with good color. We have never fished this lake before so we begin as always with a 500 and find out what is happening. A couple of layers are let out and we get the boat into 2 to 4 foot of water until we feel the lure touching the bottom. We slowly turn out until the lure begins to run free and turn back in slowly to get the lure bumping again. We are now contour trolling the 2 to 4 feet depth and checking out our speeds while doing so. The lure is transferring the hard and soft bottoms back to us and we are already beginning to notice a bar off of a point of land. We go a distance past the bar and come back with a 400 and try to keep the lure fishing by contour trolling in 4 to 6 feet of water. Our next pass insures us of a nice bar and by the time we get to the 250 and down to about 9 feet, we begin to notice a couple of nice fingers that are breaking quickly into some deeper water. Two markers are thrown on the fingers and we now make a few straight line passes across the tips of these two points with a 200 around 11 feet. On our second pass a good bass is hooked and a 4 pounder is landed. We waste no time in getting the boat anchored in the right spot and get to the cast. A 100 is chosen and the cast is made and we are into them good. We get 14 bass up to 5 3/4 pounds before it is over. A couple of shoreline sightings are taken and written down and we now have another spot that will last us a lifetime.

Let's go across the street to that other clear water lake. We start with a 500 just as before. Our first pass doesn't seem a lot different than the our first lake other than the fact that we can stand up and see if there are any fish around by looking into the water. We are on the inside edge of the weedline. All goes well on the first pass so we head back with a 400 at about 6 feet. We go about 20 feet and we are into some heavy weeds that come near the surface. It doesn't take long to see that at this depth, the weeds will not allow us to check out our depths and speeds. We turn on the depth meter and notice that the weeds are tall all the way to the drop off and they do not come up too high where they end at 21 feet. Our only choice is to stack up our lures along the face of this weedline. We find that we are having trouble keeping lures in position with no markers thrown. We run the boat and try to follow the base of the weedline and this shows us a couple of nice fingers that run way out and drop off into deep water. One marker is thrown just inside the tip and just out of the way of our trolling passes. Many passes are made stacking our lures all the way to the base of the weeds at 21 feet. At times our lures were running free and other passes we made some contact with the weeds but were able to jerk them off with some hard sharp snaps of the rod tip. Now we must make contact with the bottom beyond the 21 foot weedline. We have already established some good line sights for our passes along both sides and off the end of the bar. We were paying attention to where we were and got some sightings that will work for our first couple of passes. An 800 on No-Bo is put on and enough line is let out to get the lure just tipping the bottom. We bump about 4 times and the lure goes dead. We reel in and there is a heavy glob of dark moss about a foot long on the treble hook. Several passes are made with the same results. We find that we can not work our lures on the bottom. We have just lost one of the most important factors in fishing and that is the walk of the lure on the bottom and our ability to make a fish take. We find out that this moss finally goes away at about 42 feet.

A good Spoonplugger with a lot of experience can still make a catch of fish on this type of lake. He will know that it will take more time and his interpretation will have to be on the money in working these depths of water but it can be done.

Buck Perry said this. "The most important observation that you will make in your fishing is in terms of WATER COLOR". Our comparisons of these two lakes do not list all of the problems that exist for the fisherman in clear waters. We only listed a few. There are many more.

Do not forget to include the words WATER COLOR in this fishing season. If you do not fish any clear lakes this season and only fish the ones with the best color, you are already headed for a better season with more fish catching and many times it will be with No-Bo and the smaller lures. You will also be getting into more casting positions easier, quicker and more often than in the past. And this success will be just because you picked the lakes with the best WATER COLOR.

Yes it is that easy!

Good Spoonplugging
John Bales

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



A fisherman must be ready for all kinds of fishing situations. He must have enough fishing knowledge to know what lure or tool will produce the most fish in all kinds of weather and water conditions. He must be able to read these weather conditions and understand how the different species of fish react to these conditions and then know what tool will put the most fish in the boat. These tools must control his depths and speeds in order to draw a strike from the fish. The speeds may vary from a Spoonplug reeled as fast as he can turn the handle to a jump type lure just barely moved across the bottom. When we speak of depth control, we speak in terms of where the fish are in depths, not depth in feet.

A very important subject to talk about is straining the water when we are checking out the shallows. What does this really mean? Why is it important that we strain the water? Mr. Perry separated the shallows from the deep at around 8 to 10 feet. He came to this conclusion because his findings told him that the fish react differently when they are in the 8 to 10 feet depths and shallower. When the fish are deeper than 8 to 10 feet, the fish as well as the fisherman will use the bottom as our guide. When they make it into the shallower waters, the fish can be anywhere from the surface to the bottom. Therefore when checking out the shallows, we need to remember to check this out. We do this by running the different line lengths. Starting out with one color (4 layers approx), and then two layers (8 layers), and then three colors (twelve layers).

The same goes for when we are casting the shallows. We need to especially check this out during the early part of the season. When two fishermen are casting the shallows, several lure types should be used to check out the different depths and speeds. The upper layer could be checked out with a type of suspending jerk bait, then the mid depths with a rattletrap and the bottoms with a jump type lure like a silver buddy or a jig. Your speeds and weights will be checked out with each type of bait when the fish are in the shallows until the correct depth and speeds are found. Then both fishermen can change to what is working at that particular time. There will be days when the jig is the best speed and depth control, but don't get stuck on any one type of lure or tool. You must check it out and it may be different not only each day but can change by the hour.

A lot of our Spoonpluggers do not get their boat out in the early season. One reason may be that they do not want to cast or are not very good at it. Whatever the reasons are, it all boils down to checking out your depths and speeds with the right tools. We want to be in control of our fishing. If we try to tell a fish where he has to be and what we think will catch him, then most of the time we will fail. This is why we must stick to and remember the basics of Spoonplugging. All successes and failures must be answered in terms of depth and speed control. There is nothing else!

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:

Just don't forget that clear water can mean the movements are not as predictable; they occur deeper, for a shorter distance, and for less time than those in water of less clarity. It is for this reason, we consider the selection of water color as the most important thing you can do to make a good catch. You can't control the weather, the water conditions, the movements of the fish or his appetite, BUT you can control, in most instances, the water color.

In time, a good Spoonplugger can work out ANY water. If it's clear, it takes a little longer. He will work hard and become good in his interpretation and presentation.

Fortunately, the fisherman does not have to limit himself to just clear conditions. He usually has a choice of different bodies of water, or the SEASONAL CHANGES in water color that occur in both natural and man-made lakes.

In natural lakes there is a degree of change due to algae growth, pollution, boat activity, wind and rain run-off. In artificial reservoirs there is a seasonal change, and in addition, very few reservoirs exist that do not have different water color in different areas. Normally, the upper part of a reservoir will have darker color due to the feeder streams. A good rule to follow is to move toward the headwaters of the main channel or feeder streams when seeking darker water. This could also be true when the reverse is desired.

There are, however, some areas where a fisherman does not have access to a great variety of water. He is limited to water in his area that does not change during the season—a stabilizing water color. If this is a problem, he should realize it and fish accordingly. For instance, if the only available water is clear and deep, he knows from the study how light affects fish, he would have to expect the fish to be deep most of the time, and he would have to present the lures properly. If this proves too difficult, he would put the emphasis on picking the right weather conditions, such as cloudy, hazy, or rainy days; or fish early or late. Or at night so the clear water is partially offset by the darker conditions.

Most of the time we will be faced with too much clarity. But, in some sections of the country at certain periods of the year, we may face water which is too muddy. The entire lake may be affected, but still, some sections will have a greater degree of clarity (less muddy) than others. Most of the time the problem is not finding waters with more clarity, but rather **finding more dingy areas**. Your selection of water color will have a definite bearing on your catches. It could spell the difference between catching fish or not catching fish. It will determine whether or not fishing is easy or tough.

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