



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 10

#168

FOUNDED 1991

October 2008

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The last meeting was held September 15, 2008 at the Kendallville Public Library with 18 members present.

Fishing reports were given and quite a number of good fish were being caught. Howard LaLone had boated two very nice northerns, one 38 1/2 inches and the other a 40 incher. Shawn Nicodemus had made a trip to a Michigan lake and caught over a dozen nice northerns. David Gould has been fishing Hershtown for crappie, but it will be closed down for the season by the time you receive this newsletter. Paul Peterson reported a couple of 18 inch bass caught recently, and Mike Price reported 249 northerns so far this year and 5 musky in the last week. John Bales caught a 5 3/4 pound bass from an area lake recently...one of the biggest bass he's caught this year.

John's talk this month was on fishing reservoirs. He suggested that everyone should become familiar with reservoirs in order to round out fishing knowledge.

Although we are in an area of the country with relatively few reservoirs, we have one of the better ones in the Midwest: Mississinewa Reservoir near Peru. Actually there are three reservoirs in this area: J. Edgar Roush (Huntington), Salamonie, and the largest, Mississinewa.

John explained that although fish are fish, whether in north, south, east or west, and whether in a natural lake, a river or a reservoir, our natural lakes only offer bars, humps and saddles. Mississinewa offers the wider sweeping bars, delta ridges, a dam with rip rap as well as the structure situations found in natural lakes and rivers.

Mississinewa's water level was lowered for a couple of years while the dam was being repaired. As a result, you may get hung up on buckbrush from time to time while trolling, but hangs are fairly common in reservoirs and river systems and such systems gives us experience using a lure knocker as well as fishing structure situations we may not have experienced before. You can walk a Spoonplug in most of the reservoir; something that has become increasingly difficult in our natural lakes.

If you haven't fished a reservoir, plan to put it on your "Must Do" list for next year.

John Also discussed the "drop shot" rig. Rigging a drop shot is relatively easy to do. Usually you tie a hook, using a Palomar knot leaving a foot to 18 inches tag end. Place a lead weight on the end and you're ready to go. It can be fished with either live bait or more preferably a plastic worm.

This is used for a very slow speed control. It is definitely **not** a mapping tool so it must be used only on known spots and is usually used as a vertical jigging method, usually drifting, with an electric trolling motor or using an outboard, alternately kicking it in and out of gear.

Mr. Perry was using such a rig for slower speeds many years before it became a popular thing for the tournament guys.

NEXT MEETING: October 20, 2008 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P. M.

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"

I have been asked to reprint this for the newer Spoonpluggers. This a 10 minute project to have made up (and probably improved upon) and placed in your tackle box that could save you a lot of time, pain, and perhaps an emergency room bill:

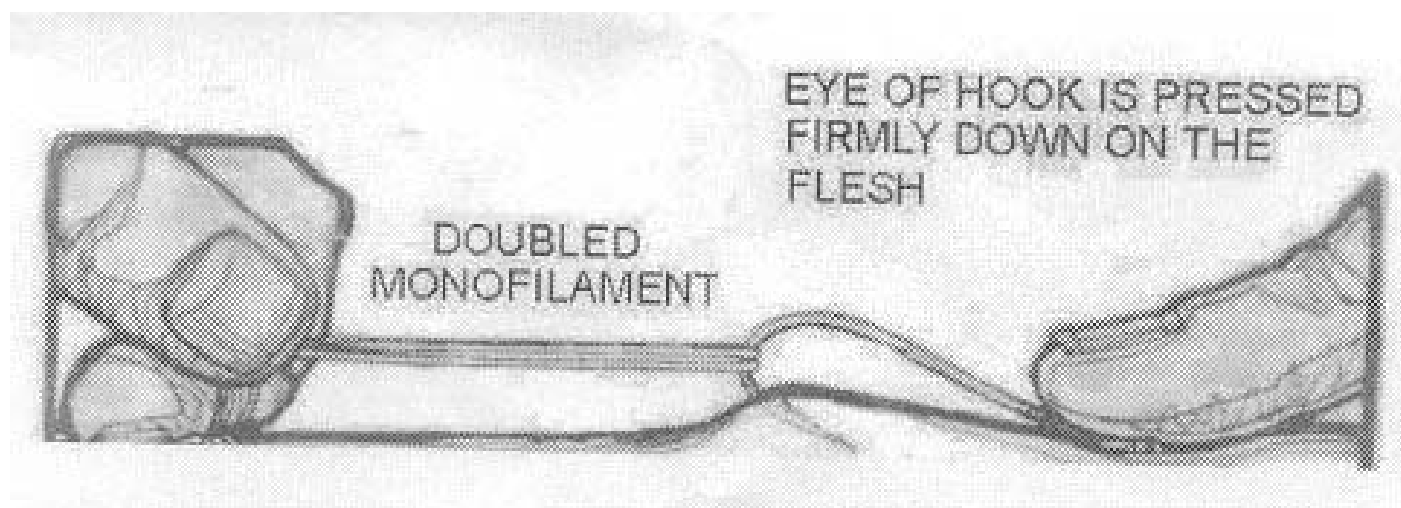
Sooner or later nearly every fisherman becomes a victim of his own or a fishing partner's hook. A fishing trip can be ruined by a wild cast and most methods I've heard concerning hook removal don't sound that feasible. Like poking the hook on through and cutting off the barb, etc. Might want to carry a bullet to bite on if you try that one.

But, this has been used effectively by several members within our own club in numerous cases. It is "nearly" painless and has actually been taught in a lot of emergency rooms around the country.

All you need is a piece of strong cord (No-Bo will work fine). Loop the line or cord around the embedded hook. Then press down the eye-end of the hook (for treble hooks it's best to cut off the exposed hooks to make that end as long and easy to press on as possible...and to prevent yet another injury when the hook comes out.) Pressing downward on the eye-end should make the embedded hook arch upward. If you're working with a buddy, that part would be a good job for him. This leaves you with both hands to do the next step which is to give the line or cord a good, sharp, crisp YANK. The hook pops out painlessly because the barb is prevented from grabbing meat as it exits. It's actually rolling out at an angle that keeps the barb from grabbing onto anything! I've used this method once on Duane Grate and it worked splendidly as it has for several others in our club.

It should be noted that while this method works in many instances, it won't work in each and every case. A hook embedded in the face, for instance, may require a professional touch. As your mother used to say: "You could put an eye out!"

So as an end-of-the-season project, rig up a cord or line with finger loops for ease of use, a little antiseptic, a couple of band aids, put it all in a zip-lock to tuck in your tackle box and you'll be all set for when (not if) you need it.



"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



All fishing successes and failures must be answered in terms of **Depth** and **Speed** control. When talking of depth, we are not talking about depth of the water in feet but the depth that the fish are, in feet. When we look or think about speed, we should think of it in this way: Speed is the velocity at which the lure moves through the water; how fast or how slow. The speed is what makes the fish take the lure. The faster speeds are needed when the waters are at their warmest temperatures and when the fish are most active, and used when working the shallows. The slower speeds are used when the waters are colder, when the fish are less active, and when working the deeper waters. In pre-frontal conditions, your speeds are faster. Post frontal conditions, your speeds are slower. These are guidelines, but every day is different and we must always be checking out our Depths and Speeds.

A troller is always aware of his depths and speeds. A caster is not. A caster has no way of knowing what the controls of Depth and Speed mean let alone understand them. The Spoonplugging is always aware of his depths and speeds and knows exactly what it took whenever a fish has just taken his lure. He is aware of where the fish was when he took the lure and what it will take to duplicate what he has just done.

A lot of Spoonpluggers have a speed read-out on their depth meter. Many go by that in order to duplicate what they have done to catch a fish. Many of us just go by the feel of the lure. It matters little what you do to duplicate the speed control as long as you know what it was.

When it comes to casting, speed will come into play in how many fish you will put in the boat. When casting a Spoonplug, the retrieve most of the time will be fast and steady. The speed with which you get the fish to the boat will determine how many fish you will catch out of the school before the fish are spooked. The faster you get that hooked fish out of the school and into the boat, the more fish you will be able to catch. Once they are spooked, it is over.

When having to use a jump type lure on the cast, you will have to check your speeds to find out what will make the fish take. Let's say that you hit a fish trolling a Spoonplug but the situation will not allow you to cast a Spoonplug. You are limited to a jump type lure like a jig or a silver buddy. Many times a jump type lure will not allow you to catch a fish. Why? You may have forgotten that it took a bottom bumping lure to make this first fish take the lure in the first place. You are changing the control that it took to make that first fish take the lure. In this case, you may try but if you cannot get them to take, you best get back on the troll.

When casting the jump type lures, you will still have to check out your speeds. When using a lure like a jig or a silver buddy, you must jump the lure a distance and then let the lure go back to the bottom. Your speeds may vary from a slow drag and a 1/8 oz. jig to pointing your rod towards the water and ripping it over your head with a jig that might weigh over an ounce. How deep you are fishing and the activity of the fish will dictate just what size jump type lure you will need and how fast you need to jump it.

We are not talking about rocket science. It is only depth and speed control. If you look at all of this in terms of depth and speed control, you will have no trouble understanding any of this.

The key to fishing jump type lures is to create a rhythm in your retrieve. You jump the jig. To keep the slack out of the line, you reel in some line as the jig is sinking. All the while you have your eyes on the line between where the line enters the water and the rod tip. As the jig is sinking you lower the rod tip slowly and you are watching that line for any movement. Any time you see the line jump you set the hook immediately. Do not wait! A fish can suck in a lure and spit it out in an instant.

Thinking in terms of speed is just as important in jump type lure as it is with a Spoonplug. A Spoonplugging that has the ability to use these tools in the right place, at the right time, and in the right manner can have success in any body of water, in any season and catch any species.

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:

What ‘triggers’ the activity and movements of the fish?”

There is no question that it is a weather condition. But, we doubt if anyone knows the **exact** part that starts and stops the movements. It could be a combination of many things. We have our ideas but we have no definite **FACTS**. We feel **LIGHT** plays a major role, and Buck can quite often predict when a movement is about to begin, or when one is in progress, by his observations of the light present. He uses his **LIGHT** observations as his guide to the activity and movements of the fish—for he says: “If my light observations give me the answers, that’s good enough for me.”

One thing we should all agree on is the movements of the fish are not “triggered” or controlled by their hunger. We would have a hard time figuring out why all the fish in the lake become hungry at the same time. And, it would not explain the activity and movement without feeding. A game fish can be made to “strike”—this is his nature. We never expect to catch our fish feeding, but we’re happy when this occurs.

You may want to know if the moon has any effect on the fish? We have not been able to find any relationship between movements and the phase of the moon. If there were any, we are quite sure local weather and water conditions would completely wreck it.

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“Are fish of all sizes and age groups bunched up together down in the deep water?”

The study material said the smaller fish were not compatible with the larger fish. We classify the smaller fish into a group, called “yearlings.” These are normally from one to three years old. Some may be older, but where growth is good, you can view the smaller fish group as being of this age. A better way probably to view the smaller fish would be to say, until they reach about 2-2 1/2 pounds, they are not compatible with the larger fish. When the larger fish get on the move, the yearlings scoot to the safety of the shallows.

You will find, in some instances, where a school of bigger fish are all about the same size. At other times, they will come in several different sizes. The age, fertility, and reproduction of a body of water would have a bearing on the sizes in any particular school.

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“Are there fishing situations where the fish, when they move towards shallower water, do not move toward or along structure such as bars, but will move shallower by going ‘vertically’ toward the surface?”

This Spoonplugging (structure fishing) study is primarily concerned with the larger species of game fish (bass, walleye, northern pike, muskies, stripers, etc.). However, there are certain water situations and certain species of fish where part of a movement may be, at times, directly toward the surface. The fish may be “drawn” toward the surface due to some attraction or “noise.” However, all the movements would be related to structure or some bottom feature; **AND**, the upward movement (toward the surface) will occur only **AFTER** the fish become active and moving. In a later study we will discuss fishing situations where a part of a migration may be vertical. But to **CONSISTENTLY** put fish on our stringer, “structure” (features of the bottom the fish use) is still our guide to where most of the **CATCHABLE** fish may be found.

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