



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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#172

**FOUNDED 1991**

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The January meeting was held January 19, 2009 at the Kendallville Public Library with 20 members present.

Both Denny Coulardot and John Bales reported catching BIG bluegills through the ice lately....9 1/2 to 10 inchers! Also reported were a number of big crappies caught on area lakes.

The Illinois Spoonpluggers Winter Seminar was also discussed. If there is enough interest, we may take more than one vehicle. Those interested should contact Denny Coulardot (260) 691-3118 or John Bales (260) 854-3921 to make the necessary arrangements. Just as a reminder: Due are due (a book of stamps) If you haven't yet paid, please make sure I receive dues by March 31, 2009 to prevent being removed from the mailing list. Thanks.

John Bales discussed the importance of re-reading both the Green Book as well as the 9 Volume Home Study Series. **Most** people who read the Green Book from cover to cover are amazed at the wealth of information contained therein. **Many** try to adopt the at least some of the Spoonplugging procedures into their fishing endeavors. **Some** obtain the necessary "tools" and become proficient with the mechanics of Spoonplugging. **A few** stick with the procedures long enough to make them automatic in their everyday fishing. These few understand the relationships involved with weather and water conditions, breaks, breaklines, movements and migrations, mapping procedures, etc. And a **small number** of fishermen become serious students of Spoonplugging and constantly challenge themselves to become a little better

with each passing year.

Which category a fisherman fits into is of no importance to anyone other than that particular fisherman. If he/she is happy with his/her fishing success, that is all that matters.

HOWEVER, if he/she wants to become better, one **MUST** become a student. Students must study. This is what the best in the business have done.

John and Denny have read the study material over and over. You might ask: "Why is this necessary...I GET it!"

The reason a Spoonplugger may want to re-read the material is that following several years of putting the Spoonplugging procedures into practice (experience) is that some of the material will make much more sense once some practical application is under one's belt.

Spoonpluggers who have read the study material again will tell you that there were many things that were overlooked the during the first reading. There were many things that were not thoroughly understood during the first reading, and there were many things that were somehow "forgotten" since the last reading.

So, no matter which of the categories you fit into, you will do yourself a big favor by taking the time to re-read the material. If John and Denny are still learning things from it, you and I can most assuredly find things that will help us in the upcoming fishing season.

**NEXT MEETING: February 16, 2009** at  
the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.

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

## ILLINOIS SPOONPLUGGERS 7<sup>th</sup> WINTER SEMINAR

March 14, 2009

Elk Grove Village, IL

The Illinois Spoonpluggers will host their 7th Annual Winter Spoonplugging Seminar on Saturday, March 14, 2009 at the Elk Grove Public Library in Elk Grove, Illinois. The seminar will run from 9:00 AM-4:45 PM. The cost is \$20 per person, and will include coffee, rolls, lunch, and handout materials.

**#1 - TOPICS / QUESTIONS:** All Spoonpluggers who attend are asked to submit **ONE QUESTION** that will be discussed by the participants. Questions should refer to actual on-the-water experiences (not hypothetical situations) and pertain to the areas of:

- Basic Movement of Fish
- Structure, Breaks, and Breaklines
- Weather and Water
- Tools and Controls
- Presentation of Lures
- Lake Types
- Mapping and Interpretation
- Mental Aspects

**#2 - REGISTRATION & FEE:** Submit your question, along with an enclosed check for \$20.00, PAYABLE TO *JAMES TAYLOR* and mail to: *Phil Szafranski, 1028 Glenlake, Park Ridge, IL 60068.*

**#3** John Bales presentation this year will be a discussion of topics related to fishing the deepest water in the area.

**#4** Meet and greet Certified Spoonplugging Instructors, pick their brains, and maybe arrange an outing.

**NOTE –** Here's your opportunity to discuss Spoonplugging with experienced Spoonpluggers from around the Midwest. Submit a question and we'll try to answer it.

The deadline to submit a written question for discussion at the seminar is Thursday, February 12, 2009.

**REGISTRATION AT THE DOOR WILL BE \$20**

**CONTACT:** You may direct inquiries regarding the seminar to...

**Jim Duplex, Seminar Coordinator**

**E-mail:** [jjd82@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjd82@sbcglobal.net)

**Phone:** 630-579-9815

Attention: *The library does not open until 9:00AM.* Plan your arrival accordingly. There are restaurants in the area where you can get coffee and breakfast if you come early.

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# *Good Spoonplugging*

**By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor**



As much as I hate winter, ice fishing seems to help make it go away just a little faster. Depth and Speed control are two of our most important controls as a Spoonplugger. If we are a little off on one or the other, we may not make much of a catch. Speed control should be thought of as the velocity at which the lure moves through the water. Depth control is not looked at in depth in feet but where the fish are in depth. Our speed controls can vary from just enough to get the lure to wiggle (early season, cold fronts) to where the boat is starting to plane out (summer or more stable conditions). We must always be aware of our depths and speeds. Trolling makes us very aware of what it takes to make a fish take our lures.

Let's talk a bit about depth and speed through a hole in the ice. Our thinking should be the same as always. Depth control means drilling a hole in the right location (where the fish are). Depth control could also mean: Are the fish on the bottom, somewhere in the middle or just under the ice? If you don't put the lure in front of the fish, they will not see it to eat it. The depth meter will allow the fisherman to see if there are any suspended fish and the fisherman can adjust line length to get the lure close to the fish. Using a meter that will actually show the fisherman's jig is a good aid in allowing good depth control to aid him in getting the bait close to the depth that the fish are.

The winter is not much different than any other time of the year as far as the activity of the fish. The fish could become active once or twice a day. If you get into them early in the morning, you can expect something to happen in the afternoon. If they do not do much in the morning, then it will most likely be one movement for that day and it may occur sometime in the middle of the day.

Speed control through the ice is normally slower than slow, however once the fish become active, you can speed it up a little until the action begins to subside. Then it is back to a very slow speed again. Your observation of what you see on the depth meter, coupled with how the fish are taking or reacting to the lure at that particular time should tell you what mood the fish are in. You can move your lure (speed control) to take care of what you are observing at that time. The activity and the depth that the fish are may help decide what weight lure or jig is used and how fast or slow you move it up and down.

If you are not thinking in terms of Depth and Speed Control in your ice fishing, maybe you should.

*Good Spoonplugging*

*John Bales*

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**“The more I learn, the more I see there is to learn.”** E. L. “Buck” Perry

### **BUCK SEZ:**

*“I have been mapping my lake for four or five years. But there are many days when I can only pick up one or two fish trolling the deeper structures. I know where and how to make the trolling passes so as to hit the best spots in deeper water, but I still can’t find more than a couple fish. Some days I can’t find any. What is wrong and what should I do?”*

It appears you know your lake (depths, structure, breaks, breaklines), and the spots in deep water where a “lone” fish (straggler) can be caught. So you should know bad weather can have the fish deep and inactive. The “stragglers” should indicate this. And, on those days when nothing is found (shallow or deep), you should know you are probably not fishing deep enough or not presenting lures well enough.

We have stressed the importance of taking a casting position when a fish is caught trolling. We have stressed the point of checking speeds when the fish are deep and dormant, under a bad weather condition.

I would seem to me you don’t have much of a problem. Under these conditions, you should stop the trolling and go to the cast, especially when you hit a straggler. You should “fan” cast the area where the fish was caught, and **then go deeper**. As the depth increases, the speed control gets slower, so you have to use lure styles to work the deeper water (on the bottom) slower.

I find good fishermen, good mappers, good interpreters, and especially **good trollers** have a tendency to **not** take up a casting position when fish are not moving well (bad weather condition). They will hit a straggler on a deep contact point, and if several passes do not produce additional fish, off they go to another structure, break, or breakline.

I can’t find too much fault with this as I find myself doing the same thing. I think the reason for this is two-fold. First, I know the fish are deep and dormant, and I can only expect straggler movement to structure, but if I go long enough and hit enough places, I will make a catch (of stragglers). Second, I keep hoping a mass of fish will move within reach at some place during the day.

Now be sure you understand the situation. All good Spoonpluggers go immediately to the cast when it is indicated the fish are moving. But, when a bad weather condition comes up, and only straggler movement is expected (or proved), it is then he backs off from taking a the casting position.

I feel the main reason a good troller, mapper, interpreter is reluctant to take the casting route during a bad deep-water situation is due to his **not having the patience** to work the deeper water with slow jump-type lures. He might try it for a couple of casts, but then he’s off and running again. He probably says to himself, “If I gotta catch them “still” fishing, **I’d rather find out more about the lake.**”

Years ago, I’d go to wire line on the troll, and I’d spend hours working extra deep water with slow jump-type lures **in order to catch fish**. But in later years, and especially now, the deep slow water casting just to catch fish doesn’t appeal to me very much. Probably if I entered a tournament, and the weather and water was marginal, I’d spend most all my time using deep, clear, cold-front casting procedures again.

However, if you want to catch fish under the conditions as described, you must stop trolling when a deep straggler is hit (or when you completely fail) and go to the cast for the deep or dormant fish. All this depends, however, on if you know where and how to fish deep water.

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