



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 March 15, 2010 with 25 members and guests present. We welcomed Randy Thomas of Angola as a prospective new member. Denny Coulardot reported that he and several other NIS members attended former NIS President Lloyd Kline's funeral. Lloyd and his daughter both died tragically last month in an automobile accident. Lloyd was a long time Spoonplugger and the first President of our club. You could always pick Lloyd out of a group on the water because he always trolled faster than everyone else. His motto was "crank the speed up till your arm hurts...then go a little faster". You never saw him in a bad mood. He will be missed.

It was reported that the ice was off nearly all area lakes (and is certainly off ALL of them now!) and many have put away the ice fishing gear for the season and switched over to the boat. Denny reported catching the first musky of the year and John Bales reported catching a number of bass. He recently caught 40 bass in a day with 20 over 3 pounds and 5 over 4 pounds.

John gave a report on the recent Winter Seminar hosted by the Illinois Spoonpluggers. It was reported as a very informative and enjoyable seminar as always. A video was shown of an on-the-water training session with John Bales. Stephen Gillian shot and produced the video last summer and it should be available for purchase sometime later this year. It is reported to be one of the best training videos produced on Spoonplugging.

Terry O'Malley and Geri Perry were both present. Terry gave the audience some amusing inside details

of working and fishing with Mr. Perry in the early days of Spoonplugging. If you have never attended the Illinois Winter Seminar you should make the effort next year. It is one of the year's premier highlights for Spoonplugging.

Denny discussed the removal of the belly hooks on Spoonplugs in the fall of the year. Many Spoonpluggers have trouble in the fall when the trees are shedding their leaves. Removing the belly hook can prevent catching a lot of these leaves when it becomes a problem. Denny doesn't believe it affects the hooking percentage that much. When leaves are a real problem, keeping your lure in the water for longer periods can outweigh any loss in hooking percentages. It could affect the depth that the smaller lures run, however, the lateness in the year when leaves are a problem is usually the time of year when larger lures are in use more often.

Also coming up is the **Leoni Spoonplugging Outing** in Jackson, Michigan scheduled for June 8-13, 2010. An always well attended event, John and TJ Zaborny spoil everyone that shows up for the event.. The outing headquarters is at John and T J's home, a beautifully secluded area on the east side of Jackson, and features free camping, home cooked breakfast and supper each day, many area lakes, a fish cleaning station, you name...they got it! This is a fun outing with more Spoonpluggers attending each year..

**NEXT MEETING: April 19, 2010 at the
Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.**

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"

(Reprint of a portion of Chase Klinesteker's "Lunker Hunters" newsletter)

Only 2 ways exist to present lures: casting and trolling. We should use both every day we are on the water because some days only one or the other will produce. Trolling is our teacher to learn structure and cover lots of water. Casting is used when we have pinpointed the fish or want to fish an area more thoroughly. Skills using both presentations are needed, and trolling is the more difficult. Lures were the first tool category discussed. There are 4 lure types: 1) Free running bottom bumping (crankbaits), 2) Jump lures, 3) Weedless, and 4) Topwater. All lures on the market will fit into one or more of these types. All lures will catch fish (or they wouldn't be made). The key is to control the depth and speed of your lures to trigger a reflex strike from the fish. Because the needed depth and speed are changing often, you need to check all depths and all speeds with your tools to arrive at the proper combination (e.g. strain the water). Some common lures were displayed and limitations in depth and speed control with them were discussed. This was compared with the 7 sizes of Spoonplugs giving extremely accurate depth control from 2 to 25 feet, along with speeds of 1 ½ to 10mph without changing depth. Spoonplugs (crankbaits) were the type recommended to be used most often, since one can obtain the fastest speeds both casting and trolling with them, and we can learn more about the lake bottom. Jump lures are used to check the slower speeds by casting. If no results are obtained in an area after 8-10 casts with jump lures, one should return to trolling to cover water, learn structure, and locate fish. Weedless and topwater baits should be available, but have limited times when they are effective (e.g. what portion of the day do topwater lures usually work?).

Also discussed as a factor in triggering reflex strikes was use of the unnatural in lures. Walking a Spoonplug on bottom structure creates a very erratic action. This gives the appearance of a weak or disoriented baitfish and is quickly pounced upon. A free swimming lure running at a constant speed is much less likely to trigger a reflex strike. How often do you see badly deformed or albino fish in Nature? It is because the unnatural is eliminated first. Chartreuse is an often effective color in lures, yet occurs rarely in Nature. Maybe we don't always have to make our lures appear natural to get strikes. It is the depth and speed control that gets results.

Other important tools were discussed also. Markers are key to helping us learn and visualize bottom structures, and they simplify lure presentation, mapping, and interpretation. Boats should be safe for the waters being fished, but smaller is better for accurate boat control while trolling. Smaller motors (10-15 hp) are the best for accurate speed and direction control, but safety needs to be considered. Large fast motors usually result in "running and gunning" and structures are not worked thoroughly.

Trolling rods should be short and stiff to give the angler a feel of the bottom. If a trolling rod is too long and flexible, one may lose feel, knowledge, time, fish, and lures. Casting rods should be 5 ½ to 6 feet long with heavy action to cast lures up to 1 or more ounces. A casting rod should be strong so you control the fish, not the other way around. Trolling reels should be level wind, light saltwater type with a star drag and anti-reverse. The best control is when the handles turn as the free-spool lets out line. Backlashes, lost lures, and lost fish could increase without that feature. Casting reels should be of the open faced, level wind, baitcasting type for a smoother and better drag than a spinning reel. Also, spinning reels will twist the line as the drag lets out, weakening it. Learning to cast a baitcasting reel is not very difficult if one remembers to cast smoothly at the elbow. Snap casts with the wrist are reserved for spinning reels! Keeping a full spool of line helps you control the fish better, and reduces backlashes. The best trolling line is Bucks' Baits No-Bo, which is a metered monofilament with the stretch removed. I like the 17 pound test for most situations. It is stiff and gives excellent feel of bottom conditions when trolling with just a slight give to it. Some use braided lines for trolling, but it is less accurate in depth control, and can be almost too stiff, sometimes resulting in lost lures, broken rods, or hooks pulled out of fishes' mouths. Casting lines recommended are 15-20 pound test monofilament with some color in them for visibility. It is better to use the stiffer, cheaper mono lines available for casting to give one a feel of the lure and bottom. Braided line can be used for casting also, but has some of the same problems as when used for trolling.

However, its' feel is excellent and you can walk bottom from a slightly deeper anchoring position than with mono, so I use it at times also. Anchors are very important to hold the boat in place for fan casting or repeat casting to a school of fish (the ultimate goal of all Spoonpluggers). A 15 to 20 pound 3 fluke river anchor or Danforth wind anchor are good choices. 2 anchors are recommended with 50-100 feet of 5/8 inch rope on each. A big net is essential to make sure we control and land the fish. Most big fish are lost at boatside. We spend too much time, effort, and money to hook the fish of a lifetime, and then to lose it because of none or too small a net! The depth sounder and other informational tools are important also. Mr. Perry worked on his first sounder in the late 30's and developed the first flasher prototype after that. His experience in World War 2 working on submarine electronics allowed him to appreciate what a fine tool a depth sounder can be. Yet he constantly reminded us of how we can allow it to become a crutch, ending up running around the lake looking for fish and not being thorough in our depth and speed control.

Each tool that we decide to use should be looked at in terms of how well it will allow us to control the depth and speed of our presentation, and we should constantly be checking all depths and all speeds on structure until we arrive at the fish. It makes sense to go back to basics!

Chase Klinesteker, Certified Spoonplugging Instructor

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



If you ever shook Mr. Perry's hand, you would find that it was a very firm hand shake. A look at the man's forearms was a dead give away to what was coming. His whole attitude was similar. He was a great football player. His mind was strong and willing to do what ever needed to be done to achieve his goal. His goal in life was to find out what made a fish tick and what he needed to do to catch him. He did just that. A life time of effort on the water gave him the answers he looked for. Through the scorching sun and the rain and cold, he went about controlling his depths and speeds to get these answers. He fished through every season, every type body of water, and for every species of fish that swims. He checked the shallows, the deep and everything in between both casting and trolling and hit every method that ever existed (some with names and some without names) to get those answers.

With the design of the Spoonplug came a lure that would allow complete control of depth and speed at the same time. At the time there was not a lure that would allow the fisherman to control these things so he made one. The design of the Spoonplug allowed him to map the bottoms of any lake that he fished and this he did all over the country. What he accomplished without a depth meter is simply unbelievable. Each lure that he made was made to run a specific depth. If a lure was kept in the depth that it was supposed to run, it would tell you the shapes of the bottoms below. The feel of the lures on the bottom would tell if the bottoms were hard or soft or mossy or weedy. He found out that most of the water contained no fish and that only at certain places were the fish caught consistently. He coined these features of the bottom that were different from the surrounding area structure situations. And these structure situations had places on them that had even more irregularities and it was on these sharper breaking areas that were directly related to the deepest water in the area were the hot spots. He named those hot spots "contact points".

After years of gathering fishing facts, he wrote all of what he had found and put it into a book called *Spoonplugging: Your Guide To Lunker Catches*.

He started the modern era of fishing!!!!!! He gave us a vocabulary of words which describes all of the situations that he encountered. He invented all of the tools, the lures, the No-Bo line, the wire to allow us to fish deeper structure situations, the rods which give the best feel of any rod made and gave us enough fishing knowledge to become as good as we want to be.

I really do not think that this man was ever given enough credit for what he accomplished. Whenever I learn a thing or two which, by the way, is every time I fish, I do not pat myself on the back for something that I just learned. It is not thought of in this way at all. I think of how smart this Buck Perry guy was that he already knew everything that I know and I am still learning. I hope you all realize how lucky you are to be a part of 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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