



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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The last meeting was held at the Kendallville Public Library with 13 members present.

Denny reported that unless we are fishing deep, we may not come in contact with the fish. The thermocline is completely gone and with surface water temperatures dropping into the 40's the fish are going deeper and deeper to reach stable conditions. Many of the catches are coming from 30 feet and deeper. Denny also reported that he had caught 65 muskys so far and that the northern were few and far between now.

John Bales reported that while quantities of bass had slipped in the last month, quality has gone up. He reported many 4-5 lb bass being caught, all of them on much deeper structure than just a month or six weeks ago, which coincides with Denny's reports. He informed us that the changing weather conditions forces us to focus more on mapping and interpretation of the deeper water areas and to test our skills at trolling these deeper structures. He mentioned that Jerry Borst of Illinois had made a recent fishing trip to Canada and most of his catches were made at 62 feet!

John posed a question in last month's newsletter referring to the weather conditions of this past summer. "This past summer, weather conditions seemed ideal. Hotter than normal temperatures, darker water color on many lakes due to intense algae blooms, and longer periods between cold fronts." "The weather conditions seemed near ideal. They were everything we pray for, so... if conditions were so ideal, why wasn't this a better year than many of the

years when conditions did not seem so ideal...and this year was clearly not as good as some less ideal years.?" As a for instance, Lake Wawasee normally produces great catches of northerns. Sometimes monstrous catches. This year it was a bust on the northerns.

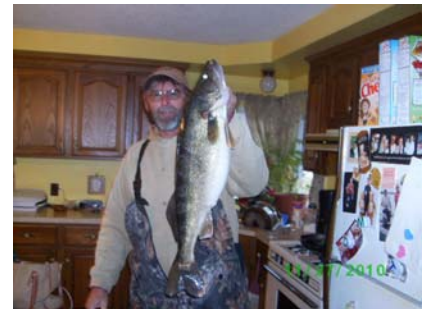
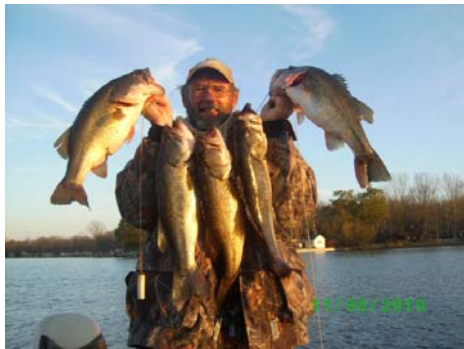
John's interpretation was that the above normal temperatures produced a thermocline that was nearly the strongest and shallowest ever seen in the Midwest. The production of such a robust or thick thermocline may have "trapped" some fish populations in the upper stratus making them reluctant to go back below this breakline. The upper stratus is warmer, oxygen rich and the conditions are more favorable for the generation of phytoplankton and zooplankton; the food sources for bait fish. And so it is speculated that with a shallow thermocline, the game fish often found themselves in an unstable water condition that otherwise would not have occurred had the thermocline been deeper. They therefore may have suspended over the deeper part of the thermocline (the thermocline may not be at the same depth everywhere in a body of water) and/or they may have been more prone to move at night. The fish that were below the thermocline were in oxygen poor water that is much colder, therefore slowing their metabolism. We get conditioned to look for the fish in certain places at certain times of the year...because they are always there! This year they may have been elsewhere!

**NEXT MEETING: December 20, 2010 at
Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.**

"KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"



Denny Coulardot,
Mike Price,
John Bales and Dan
Luley with some extra
nice late season
largemouths...plus
John with a pretty nice
walleye and small-
mouth.



“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS”



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



I will say it one time and mean it with all my heart. Late fall fishing is the best time of the year!!!!!! No jet skis, no speed boats, almost no body to contend with. The fish are predictable and some of the best catches of several species can be made this time of the year. The muskies can be taken on the troll at any time, regardless of what the water temps are. And you don't have to slow down much for them either. The bass can be taken pretty regular until the temps get into the low 40's and then you had better bring your casting equipment and just check it out. Keep one thing in mind. Once the thermocline no longer exists, the fish can be at any depth. One thing to keep in mind is that all lakes are different. Some of the lakes, you will have lots of success in and around the deeper holes. In others, the deep weedline can produce a lot of fish. So what this means is that you and I must be prepared to both troll and cast for whatever the situation calls for. This also means that you should have your blade bait rods with several weights and a spinning rod with some smaller weight jigs tipped with some kind of soft plastic. Six or eight pound test is needed for the lighter jigs. On some days, the bite might be on a blade-bait and you may have to jump it high to get a hit. On other days, just a slow lift of 6 inches or so, just enough to make the blade work will be the ticket. If you know you are fishing the correct spot and do not get any hits after checking out the blade speeds, then go to a jig and slow it down. It is still up to you and I to check out the depths and speeds just like it would be in the heat of the summer. The worst thing that you can do is try and tell a fish where he has to be and that goes for any part of the season. For me, I love it when it is down to the last few trips. It is most satisfying catching the fish casting as it is on the troll. It's fun to get into a bunch of fish on one spot and catch them for an hour. Not everyone can handle the cold weather and I don't blame them for not wanting to deal with the elements, but if you can take it, this time of the year is a blast. I didn't get to make a late season run on a couple of lakes. Clear lake can be a handful with the smallies if you are on the right spot when they become active. I missed out on Shipshewana too because I got greedy and wanted the bigger fish on Waldron. Missed out on Winona too, man that can be fun. You just can't fish them all when you are a weekend warrior. All I can say now is take a look at what kind of year you had and measure your success to that of the past. If it was better then: Congratulations! If it was not so good, there must be a reason. Figure out what happened and make up for it next season. Set some goals for yourself. Write them down if you need to and work harder and make it happen. As I look back at my own season and what was learned, I can think of one thing that I worked very hard to learn and that was fishing for the post spawn bass. It was always my understanding that when the spawn was over, the bass would immediately move to deep water and there would be a several week period where they would rest up and things would be slow. This time of year was always when the water color was at the clearest part of the year. The algae bloom had not come yet and the northern pike fishing was still slow. We used to spend a couple of weeks with the crappie at the outside edge of the weedline. It was a good time and a great time to fill up the freezer with fish. It is now known that when a good weedline is present, the fish do not always go all the way back to the deeper water but many stay in the weeds and are very easy to catch. Learning about this was one of my highlights of the season and an absolute ball. I will not ever feel that there is that lax time again and look forward to the post spawn next year. The very best thing about Spoonplugging is that the learning never stops.

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:

.....Another thing which might be mentioned is the problem encountered after you reach the 15 foot depth. The amount of line used, the type of line used, or the lure types used to reach depths below this 15 feet will separate the men from the boys. It becomes increasingly more difficult to have control beyond this depth. The “feel” starts to disappear, interpretation becomes harder—fishing in general just becomes more difficult and tiring. **To cap all this**, as depth increases, the fisherman has to become **more exact**. Fish react to depth in such a way that they are more difficult to catch and more exact presentation must be made in order to make them take. **BUT**, you must not pass up this deep water trolling just because it is difficult. Working this water or trying to place your lures correctly in this water, is the finest **teacher** around. It may take some time for you to become **exact**, but it will be well worth your effort.

If I appear to have put a lot of emphasis on trolling, you are right. In my opinion it takes far more skill to become a good troller that it does to become a good caster. For generations fishermen have been instructed in the proper procedure for casting, but never on trolling. There is a definite purpose for every trolling maneuver. And in the final analysis, **it is trolling that will tell you where, when, why, and how to cast. I can’t say the same for casting.**

Trolling will be a constant reminder of DEPTH and SPEED control—**casting will not**. If you limit yourself to casting, or overdo it, pretty soon you will be putting faith in the size, color, and action of your lures, rather than in Depth and Speed control. You can put this in your pipe and smoke it, because it will happen.

Trolling will also: more quickly eliminate unproductive water, greatly facilitates and shortens the time of mapping and interpretation, allows a greater area to be covered to find fish, produces more ‘straggler’ (Remember these fish are important on those days which produce little or no movement), allows more varied and better speed and depth control. Competes with modern day traffic, makes fishing a family sport, no casting skill is needed, allows the use of lure weights and sizes which may not be usable with the available casting rig—plus many more.

While Spoonpluggers are taught the importance of trolling, this does not rule out casting by any means. **If you want to become a good fisherman you must be in a position to do BOTH in a sane and intelligent manner.**

“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS”