



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 10

#192

**FOUNDED 1991**

October 2010

**PRESIDENT: Denny Coulardot**  
**(260) 691-3118**

**SECRETARY: Ted Walter**  
**(260) 495-5042**

**EDUCATION DIRECTOR: John Bales**  
**(260) 854-3921**

The last meeting was held at the Kendallville Public Library with 21 members present.

Plans for next year's outing are still in a process of completion. Mike Whirrett reported that he had visited a campground on Winona Lake that may be acceptable for our annual "Buck Sez" Network Outing for 2011. It was further reported that our old standby, Forest Ridge Campground, may be back in the running for 2011. It was our understanding previously that a group of year-round campers had taken a full season option on the area where we have always held the outing. Steve Bosler has had contact with the campground owner and it now appears those camper's option is in doubt. Denny Coulardot will make one final attempt to contact the Forest Ridge Campground owner and offer a final chance at retaining this campground as base camp and report back the next meeting. At least we have a backup area in case Forest Ridge fails to materialize.

Fishing reports were generally good. Some north-erns were still going at the time of the meeting. Shawn Nicodemus reported catching 39 north-erns recently on an area lake. John Bales is still catching plenty of bass. He reported a 5.6 pound bass and a 4 pounder both caught the day of the meeting. He also reported there were a lot of bluegill fishermen on the water. Denny reported that he and Mike Price had caught over 200 bass in the previous 10 days. John Bales reported that he and Jim Duplex were planning a trip to Kentucky Lake in the next couple of weeks to not only fish, but to scout for an area that would be available for a National Jamboree-type of outing. Many of our veteran members have fond

memories of the Spoonplugger Jamborees in the past that were held in Chattanooga. John and many others would like to see a return of a Jamboree as an annual event in the midsection of the country in an attempt to reestablish this special meeting of Spoon-pluggers from all over the country. We will keep our fingers crossed that this dream becomes a reality!

John's talk encompassed a series of problems con-fronting some of the members as they evaluated the latest fishing season. Some of the weaknesses in-cluded: Recognizing acceptable line sights; interpret-ing the weedline to determine the top and bottom breaklines as well as any intermediate breaklines, if present; proper use of marker buoys, including where, exactly they should be placed for making straight line passes as well as anchoring positions; trolling deeper structure; and how to effectively fan cast in order to achieve the confidence that the area is thoroughly fished before pulling anchor and mov-ing on.

John stated that most problems stem from not know-ing exactly WHERE you are. Much of this relates to the amount of time you are able to spend on the wa-ter honing your skills.

John also emphasized that the two most important things to notice when leaving the ramp (besides that your drain plug is in place) are:

- \* Where the weedline or dropoff begins, and
- \* Where is the first breakline.

**NEXT MEETING: October 18, 2010 at the  
Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.**

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

## Patience

It is said that patience is a virtue. This may or may not be true depending on a number of things, but as it applies to fishing, it is certainly an important characteristic. There are many obstacles to overcome to become a successful Spoonplugger. I define success as being confident in the ability put fish in the boat, or if not, knowing the reasons why. Each time we go fishing we are faced with a series of decisions. Our ability to make correct choices will determine our success. The essence of Spoonplugging is developing the skills to make good choices, thereby increasing our probabilities of catching fish. We learn that choosing good water color increases our odds. We learn that eliminating as much of the unproductive water as quickly as we are able increases our odds of arriving at the fish in the shortest amount of time. We learn how weather and water conditions effect the movements and migrations of fish. And we learn how to find the areas where those movements and migrations are likely to take place and how to use shoreline sightings and markers to more effectively fish those areas. Armed with the proper tools, most beginning Spoonpluggers are able to quickly learn the mechanical skills of trolling. After a time, other skills such as mapping and interpretation are developed one by one. After a period of time, ranging from months to years, these skills are refined to the point that they are practiced unconsciously. One of the most difficult obstacles in fishing for beginners and veterans alike is PATIENCE. Mr. Perry has made it very clear that the fish do not move constantly or consistently. But human nature is working against us when it comes to the patience and persistence that are often needed in order to make a catch. Patience does not come easily to most of us and it's probably harder today to be patient than it has ever been. We live in a world of "instant everything". Steam rolls out our ears while following the little old lady who has the audacity to drive 5 mph under the speed limit. We are barely able to endure being held up for an extra 30 seconds at the checkout line while the gentleman ahead of us tries to decide which lottery ticket to play. Internet speeds of a decade ago are totally unacceptable today. Patience is not impossible in today's world, but it is not the norm for our time. Patience takes practice just like any other aspect of Spoonplugging. This mental discipline may very well be much harder to master than the mechanical skills.

Fortunately there are things we can do to better develop the discipline of patience. First of all we must keep in mind what our goal is on the water; to catch a fish. Sounds easy, right? The fact is, even though we start out with that goal in mind, several hours of failing to catch fish can begin to erode our confidence. We begin to ask ourselves: "what am I doing wrong?" We know that we need to have confidence that we are fishing in the right place, in the right manner so that when the fish move we will be the first to know. But, when the fish don't cooperate, we can get mighty impatient.

So can we do anything to overcome our impatience? John Bales is one of the best and here are a few things I have learned from him over the years regarding patience:

- Try to fish with a partner. Having someone to discuss various issues with will make the times when the fish aren't cooperating seem to go by faster and keep the frustration level at a minimum.
- Refine mapping skills. Times when the fish aren't moving is a great time to do some extra mapping. Mapping is something we can always improve upon. If a few new discoveries are made on some of your favorite spots, it will definitely not be a wasted day.
- \* Fish for stragglers. There are always a few fish that are catchable. They may be few and far between, but they are almost always there. On tough days, they may be all we have. These fish may be in places they are not supposed to be. I think Frank Hamill describes stragglers best: "Have you ever driven through town at 3:00 A.M.? Everyone is in bed...except for a house here and there who have lights on. Those are the stragglers. There are always a few of every species that seem to be doing just the opposite of what is normal". Stragglers will not normally be big fish. They will normally be the "teenagers" but they can at least provide the Spoonplugger with some activity while waiting for a movement to occur.

If conditions improve and the fish become active, you will still be on the water and in a position to make a catch rather than being at home mowing the lawn!

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



# Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



When the word "Spoonplugging" comes up, those who claim to know what it is, associate the word with a so-called "method" of fishing requiring the trolling of a lure through the water. That's about as far as the person's thinking goes. Some think of the trolling as a lazy man's way of fishing. Trolling is banned in all bass tournaments so in a matter of speaking, what we do, the others have made illegal to do in their organization. Have you ever wondered why there are not hundreds of thousands of fisherman out there that are not beating the doors down somewhere to have the fishing success that the Spoonpluggers have? Would you like to know the truth about what fish do and what you need to do to catch him? Well, I hate to tell you this but the knowledge has already been out there for nearly 50 years. It's just not out there for the fisherman to see. Old wives tales have gotten in the way for years with grandpa handing what he thought he knew down to the next generation and the generation after that. Back in the 60's when Spoonplugging was going strong, here came Ray Scott with his dream to start bass tournaments. He dressed the men who fished them were dressed in jump suits with patches all over them and he made hero's out of them. Trolling was banned which surely did not put the Spoonplugger in the ball game. Television coverage put the winning faces out there with names and they were looked up to by the up-and-coming fishermen who wanted to be just like them. Soon businesses joined in for these pro fishermen to sell their products. Boats are now wrapped with every sponsor's names you can imagine. It has become big business. The bass has gone from a fish that we used to catch and eat to a fish that is basically used to sell millions of dollars worth of fishing tackle. Do you know that Terry O'Malley was going to get into a tournament before the days of no trolling and he was told that he could not fish because he was associated with a fishing tackle company! Is that not funny? Look at them now. Take a look at the musky. What is it? It is a fish with a pea sized brain and its goal is to eat other fish and carry on the species, just like every other fish. What happens if you go fishing and you catch a nice musky and you decide to feed your family with your catch? The musky has been a fish that has been put up there on a pedestal so high that if you are caught keeping one, they crucify you on the internet. I realize that if you decide to have one for supper that the fish does not continue to get bigger, but is this the way it was meant to be?

What group of fishermen get the most attention? It's not the Spoonpluggers.

What is the goal of the tournament fishermen? Is it to beat the other guy? Is it to promote their sponsor's products during the off season? Do you think that the tournament fisherman's goal is to share all that he knows with other tournament fishermen? What do you think that the kids learn about fishing when the pro's are helping them learn how to flip a jig into a bucket or on to the center of a target? Again, who is getting the most attention, the kids flipping the jigs into a bucket or target or the Spoonplugger out there in his 14 foot jon-boat with a ten horse power motor?

How many of you have met a group of fishermen out there who are willing to share what they know? How many are giving out fishing information without selling a product along with it? Are you starting to understand why there are so few of us? Which group of fishermen really has the answers and the truth about what fish do and what we must do to catch him. The truth has been out there for a very long time. The fisherman does not want to accept the truth. Mr. Perry was well aware of this. He knew that we would always be a small group. He knew that education was crucial for Spoonplugging to survive. The average fisherman does not want to have to read a book to know how to catch a fish. He wants immediate success which he thinks can be bought in a fancy wrapped package or which comes on a silver platter. He does not want to expend a lot of time and effort to achieve his goals. Are you still wondering why there are not more of us?

Yesterday I met a fellow who was fishing a tournament on a local lake near my home. He was a very nice guy and asked for some information about the lake. I told him where the best spots were and suggested a couple of areas. Eventually I brought up Spoonplugging and a man named Buck Perry. Can you believe this guy never heard of him?

*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:**

In the study of water color, we approach the subject from the same standpoint we did in Weather Conditions. That is, in terms of LIGHT. We should think of it as how much light penetrates the water. The MORE penetration, the worse the condition. The LESS penetration, the better the condition. CLEAR WATER means deep fish, short migrations, slow growth, and reproduction, increased weed and moss growth, and usually more water skiers. It means more of everything that spells trouble for you as a fisherman.

The more dingy, cloudy, or darker the water is, the better the conditions for fishing. So—a Spoon-plugger will pay as much attention to his water color selection as he will the anything—gear, methods, weather, structure, etc. If the selection of water color is not considered, he is asking for troubles which may be avoided.

We are not saying that clear water does not contain fish. What we are saying is, water clarity will control or determine **how deep** fish are—where he starts from (sanctuary), **just how shallow he comes on migration, and how long he stays.**

Presentation of lures (or bait), and interpretation of the deeper structures can be very difficult. Which means, if you are “stuck” with a deep clear lake, you must take **more** time in studying the deeper structures. It means you must work **longer** and put forth **more** effort in presenting lures **more** correctly in deep water—if you expect any degree of success.

Your reaction might be: if this is so, why not fish at night only? Hold on a minute! We did not say an absence of light, as such, we said a light **condition**. We said we use light as our guide; we’re sure other factors are involved, but this does not change our original thought. If we had a clear water situation, and the fish did not move in the daytime, our “guideline” would dictate we wait for a darker condition of light to cause the fish to come **far enough** for us to make contact.

To clarify this, let’s say you are fishing a deep clear lake. If a movement occurs in the middle of the afternoon, you might not be aware of it because the fish did not migrate up to where you were fishing. If you stayed on the lake into the night, you would draw a blank, because the fish had **already moved**, and probably would not move again until the next morning.

When you are faced with deep clear lakes, fishing at night does have its good points, but it does not mean the fish will move every night, regardless what the weather and water conditions might be. At certain periods during mid-summer, the major movements may occur at night, If you are experiencing troubles in the daytime, check it at **daylight**. This should indicate the movement pattern, and you can fish accordingly. **BUT** you must remember, any sort of movement pattern can change overnight—it usually does—at the first weather change.

You must be aware of the fact that some species, at times **DO** move at night, and some species **DO NOT** move at night

**“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS”**