

FISHING REPORTS

Bob Strek heard about the DNR recently shocking the Grand River in downtown GR and turning up a walleye over 15 pounds! Who needs to go to Lake Erie? He also said that the steelhead run is about over now in the Grand River with maybe a few still in the Muskegon River. For fishing the Grand River below 6th St. Dam, Bob likes to launch at Johnson Park. He says the best months for fishing Steelhead on the Grand River are December through March. Bob had a great day last Monday fishing the mouth of the Grand River in Lake Michigan for salmon. They landed 18 fish using spoons on downriggers and leadcore. Other reports from Lake Michigan have been spotty, but several perch boats were seen SW of the Grand Haven Pier in about 60 feet of water.

Clarence Allen and Russ Noom fished Camp Lake last Wednesday but couldn't find any panfish. Don Stephens fished the Grand River above the dam yesterday using several presentations. No steelhead were seen, but a couple nice smallmouth were caught and released. Many dead muskies were reported in Lake Saint Claire and the Detroit River with no conclusive reason as to why. Visit <http://www.greatmich.com/cgi-local/report.php> for some discussion on that. (There was also a recent major fish kill on Lake Macatawa that the DNR relates to a fast warmup this spring that overstressed the fish, which could be related to what happened in Lake Saint Claire.)

PROGRAM

8 attended the meeting. 3 articles were discussed.

1) "3 Fishing Habits"

John Bales wrote an excellent article which appeared in the April issue of the Northern Indiana Spoonpluggers newsletter. It explained how over 30 years ago he and a friend who were beginning Spoonplugging learned 3 habits that they use to this day on every trip. The first was to count down lures on every cast. Knowing that a lure sinks at the rate of about one foot per second will tell us how deep of water each cast was made to. By fanchasting an area from an anchored position, one can map the depths and determine from where the fish will approach that structure (deep water is the home of the fish). Also, bottom hardness can be determined if one uses a lure of sufficient weight (about 1/2 ounce or more). Along with trolling information, this is very useful in finding the contact point and migration route the fish use. The second habit learned was to use line (rifle) sights constantly, both while trolling and to record a spot you will want to return to. Knowing where you are at all times helps you put the lure in the proper spot to catch fish. This skill takes some time to develop, but its' effectiveness at helping produce fish is shown by the results of top Spoonpluggers. The third habit John learned and still uses is to quickly map a new lake by following a breakline (e.g. 15 foot) using the depth meter, so that the better structures can be found and concentrated on. As Buck Perry would say "we need to spend our time where we have the best chance to catch a fish". When these habits are used by top Spoonpluggers like John Bales and Denny Coulardot on a daily basis, I take note, and I recommend that others do also!

2) "Pre/Post Spawn Musky and Pike"

Terry O'Malley wrote a very informative article in the latest "National Spoonplugger" (page 3) relating to how we fish for musky and pike in the spring. He makes the point that we often are trolling deep breaklines when springtime seasonal considerations put the pike and musky up shallow in the bays and headwaters. He explains that casting is often the best presentation in this situation and he discusses different tackle, lures, speeds, and structure types to be fished. Terry has more experience fishing with Buck Perry than any living fisherman today and what he tells us is the "real thing"! I especially enjoy his relating to us what he used when fishing with Buck Perry many years ago. Bob Strek reminded us that the "National Spoonplugger" newsletter subscription can be ordered online at: buckperry.com and that renewals are due.

3) "Taking Fishing Too Seriously"

Tony Dean wrote this article in "Outdoor America", a national publication of the Izaak Walton League. This is one article that would not appear in a national fishing magazine that had fishing

tackle advertisers (are there any that don't, other than "National Spoonplugger"?). The article stated that "the quality of fishing doesn't depend on the quantity of gadgets". The author wonders: "why fishermen worry about meaningless things like color, when the simple act of putting the bait in front of the fish is what's really important". He notices that some who tie flies spend excessive amounts of time trying to emulate the real thing, but that he knows fishermen that tie poor or even ugly flies who seem to be the most successful at catching fish. He wonders if all the new gadgets and equipment available --GPS, color sounders, underwater cameras, super lines, special rods, 225-horsepower motors on 20 foot boats, etc—are that essential for the average fisherman. He feels that there will come a time when many gadgets would join the Color-C-Lector (PH meter, Oxygen meter, etc?) as items that wouldn't bring much money at a yard sale. Mr. Dean acknowledges that there is a huge difference between competitive fishing and what most of us do on weekends, but the technology they promote "raises the cost of fishing and doubtlessly scares some fishermen with thin billfolds out of the sport". Mr. Perry is gone now, but somehow I feel that this article would be approved, if not inspired, by him.

A video was shown and we discussed Spoonplugging for walleye. Very little is done differently than for other species. Mapping structure and checking all depth and speeds is important. Following procedures is necessary to cover structures thoroughly. Sometimes slower speeds should be checked a little more, especially in colder, clear water. The beauty of Spoonplugging is that if we follow procedures, we are checking for all fish species. When fishing for walleye, the most important thing is to pick waters that contain good numbers of them!

Chase Klinesteker