

LUNKER HUNTER-SPOONPLUGGERS MEETING NOV.2, 2006

This was the first combined monthly meeting of The Lunker Hunters and Spoonplugging Study Group. 10 attended the meeting. The format and programs were well received.

FISHING REPORTS

Chase fished Lake Macatawa last Saturday where he had caught a 10 ½ pound walleye last year at this time. A fish around 10 pounds was hooked, but it turned out to be a “toothless walleye” (drum)! Don Stephens and Charlie Myers have been fishing the Grand River for steelhead and have gotten some nice fish. Ask Don about a runaway boat resulting in his new rope-tying procedure! Jack Clark has been fishing there also and on one trip he had 2 on and saw 4 other fish caught. Last Monday Jim VanAsselt and a friend got 6 steelhead wading the Muskegon River near Newago. Several weeks ago Jim got 300 bluegills over a 2 week period from Camp Lake but they have shut down lately. Roger Bouwkamp only got one pike from Big Pine Island last weekend, which he felt may be due to the turnover occurring. Bob Strek said the steelhead have been slow in the Grand River below the dam, but that will likely change. Salmon fishing there this fall was very good. There have been reports of steelhead being caught from the piers at Muskegon.

MEETING

Jim VanAsselt attended the meeting and personally thanked all club members for their support and the plant arrangement the club sent to the funeral home. It is good to see him out and about. New president Charlie Myers got things rolling smoothly and on time! Bob reminded us all to vote next Tuesday, as there are 2 proposals that affect sportsmen. He encouraged us to vote for Proposals #1 (to lock in funds designated for outdoor sports and conservation) and #2 (dove hunting). Mike Dordan will coordinate our Valentines’ dinner in February. He requests that members help in getting door prizes for it. President Charlie called several potential and past members of our club and queried them for ideas and suggestions. Most mentioned were our outings. He would like to make some changes to put more vigor and new blood in the club. At the December meeting, try to bring a guest. We will have a signup sheet and use name tags. The meeting will be run on a timetable of 30 min. for fishing reports, 15 minutes business meeting, and 20-30 minutes for the first program. After a break and the 50-50 drawing, the second program will begin. Charlie feels that we come to the meeting to learn about catching fish, and that Buck Perrys’ “Green Book” is the official language of the club. That knowledge is our foundation but how we apply it can differ. The Board will meet next Friday November 9 at Cheers Restaurant on Plainfield, 9:00AM. All club members are welcome to attend. The next monthly meeting will be Thursday, December 7. Jack Clark will give the first program on care and repair of Penn 109 reels.

1st PROGRAM

Charlie talked about “Speed Control” and how we need to check all speeds in our lure presentation. He held up Buck Perrys’ book: “Spoonplugging-Your Guide to Lunker Catches” (the “Green Book”) and quoted the guideline stating: “All fishing successes and all fishing failures must be answered in terms of depth and speed control”. He explained speed as the range of movement we impart to our lures, from zero to very fast. We are constantly reminded in proper presentation of lures to check all speeds, but we often get into a rut and don’t do that. Charlie learned this past summer that sometimes, after checking faster speeds, a very slowly worked plastic worm was the only speed that would take fish. This requires a mapped and proven fish producing spot, and sometimes just waiting for the fish to become active. At other times, these same spots were only productive by casting or trolling Spoonplugs very fast. Most of the time, productive speeds are somewhere in-between these two extremes. Speed will vary from hour to hour, day to day, and season to season. Weather, water temperature, and water color all have an impact on the speed needed to trigger fish to (reflex) strike a lure. Charlie mentioned that the direction or angle

of the lure is important also, and sometimes changing anchoring position is the key to getting fish to strike. Buck Perry has mentioned that sometimes even zero speed is needed (bobber, dead bait, etc). Many thanks to Charlie for a great program and testimonial to the importance of “checking all speeds”!

2nd PROGRAM

Roger Bouwkamp talked about what he learned this past summer fishing some new lakes he hadn't fished before. His results have been some of the best catches of fish this year in the club, so we all paid attention! He said that Spoonpluggers can learn more than others because of the knowledge we begin with. Learning a new lake is fun and exciting, and it is the best way to become a better fisherman. It is easier to get into a “rut” on lakes we are more familiar with. First we must really want to learn the lake. This can be a challenge, but the results can be very rewarding. Learn what to look for. Start with a deep water hole 30-35 feet or deeper (the home of the fish). The larger and deeper holes should contain greater numbers of the largest fish. Pick the structures that extend out around that hole and map each one thoroughly, first with the depth sounder, and then by placing markers and trolling with different sized Spoonplugs, checking all depths and bottom conditions.

Visualizing the form of the structure under water takes practice, but the markers and straight line trolling passes help us greatly with that. With a weedline, place markers on the projections so that trolling passes can be made close to, but not in the weeds. With enough passes, you will begin to visualize the underwater form of the structure. Now comes the part most Spoonpluggers are reluctant to do: get out pencil and paper and draw the structure. Buck Perry reminds us to “Record what you learn” and Terry O'Malley says: “If you can't draw it, you don't know it!” Roger believes drawing maps has helped him immensely and he never regrets doing it. If a fish is caught while trolling, he throws out a marker and goes back to anchor and cast. Try faster speeds first, then check the slower jump lures. Try to figure out where the fish came from and what led him there. Your visualization or drawn map will be very helpful here. Use linesights to pinpoint the fish and make it easy to return to the spot in the future.

That is a Spoonpluggers' approach to learning a new lake and catching fish. No, it is not easy, and it requires discipline. Yet, as Roger has proven, the rewards can be great. Even if we catch no fish (they are not active most of the time), we will come off the lake with maps and knowledge that will be very useful in the future. Thanks, Roger for a very informative program!

Chase Klinesteker