

LUNKER HUNTER SPOONPLUGGERS MEETING APRIL 3, 2008

FISHING REPORT

A few steelhead are being caught below the 6th Street Dam but fishing has been slow. Charlie Meyers has been on the Grand River at the Rogue 2 times with no results. The water is very high. John Stepanovitch's son has been pier fishing at Sagatuck and gotten some nice browns and steelhead. He brought pictures of the fish and aerial photo maps of the Kalamazoo River at Sagatuck. The maps can show some good structure detail if the picture was taken under the right light conditions. I believe MapQuest, Google Earth, and Yahoo Maps have satellite images that would work for this. Jim VanAsselt fished the Muskegon River today but found the water very high there also.

MEETING

16 people attended the meeting. The Illinois Spoonpluggers gave our club a copy of the CD with Terry O'Malley and Jeri Perry on it that was shown at the Winter Seminar. They also gave our club a color copy of the "National Spoonplugger" Sept.-Oct. '05 which commemorated the life of Buck Perry. These are available in our library. Many thanks to the Illinois Spoonpluggers for making these items available to all our members. Speaking of the Illinois Spoonpluggers' Winter Seminar, 5 from our club attended it and it was great, as usual. They even gave each attendee a tackle box for their Spoonplugs! But the best part was the knowledge acquired from the discussed questions, and the answers from the many present attendees and Terry O'Malley on video. Also, John Bales gave an excellent presentation on "Mapping and Interpretation", Those who have not attended this winter seminar before should strongly consider going next year! The Lunker Hunter Outing scheduled for May 29, 30, and 31 was discussed. Cottages are available on Portage Lake and Lower Herring Lake that we can use. Many thanks to John Bouws and John Stepanovitch for making them available. When asked who might be available to attend, 9 people raised their hand. Grant Hendrixson commented that Portage Lake is one of his best and favorite fishing lakes. The club has some ½ and ¾ ounce blade baits available for sale, thanks to Tom Moore who has poured and assembled them. If larger sizes are desired, contact Brent Robbins.

FIRST PROGRAM

Grant Hendrixson and Terry Velting gave a program titled: "Presentation of Lures with Success". Terry emphasized that we first should learn about structure and proper lure presentation procedures by reading Buck Perry's Study Guide. Then Grant got up and described several ways he presents lures casting, especially in springtime. Grant has fished a lot of bass and walleye tournaments, beginning in the early 70s', and has been very successful at it. He does very little trolling. Many Spoonpluggers are just the opposite, they troll most of the time and seldom cast because they are catching numbers of good fish trolling. We well can learn from each other. Mr Perry often stated that a versatile and successful fisherman under all conditions needs to do both. Grant brought 5 rigged rods with lures on them to show us his favorite presentations casting. He uses both spinning and baitcasting outfits. In general, spinning is used on lighter lures and baitcasting on heavier lures and crankbaits. He feels that casting crankbaits can be tiring (let him cast an 800 Spoonplug for a while to discover what real tiring is!), so he mixes up his presentations to find out what works at that time and place. He is much aware of the season, structure, species, and weather conditions to help him make his selection of what presentation to begin with (interpretation). One of his most productive presentations and what he starts most tournament fishing with is a tube jig. Lighter weights (1/16 + 1/8 ounce) are used in the shallows for slower speeds. He prefers to use 8 pound mono line and Gamagatsu hooks with them. In deeper water he uses ¼ and 3/8 ounce tube jigs. A "jig and pig" is a similar presentation but it is weedless, and he uses a ¾ ounce weight and 14 pound line to fish deeper and go into heavy weeds

Grant demonstrated other presentations such as flipping, drop-shot rig, and wacky worm. These are very slow presentations used under special conditions like clear water and cold fronts. He has found them quite effective

for inactive fish. The “wacky worm” is especially slow, since no weight is used but the hook. Another presentation that he uses a lot in walleye tournaments is a vertical jigging spoon. It is used where structure or fish are pinpointed in deep water. He feels that a scent on the lure can be helpful in this stationary type of presentation. Buck Perry has said that confidence in your presentation is a big part of successful fishing, and if you feel it helps, use it. Having rods already rigged with lures is important to a tournament fisherman, and Grant said that he usually has about 12 rods with him. From his interpretation of conditions, however, he likes to narrow that down to only 3 or 4 rods that he gets out and actually uses.

Terry drew some structure situations on the dry-erase board and asked Grant to show where he would position the boat and how he would make his casts. Grant said that, if possible, he likes to have the wind behind him for more accurate and longer casting. With a good wind, walleye can be especially active in the shallows, and by positioning the boat in deep water, he can work the shallows without spooking the fish. To work deeper along a weedline or breakline, he gets on it and casts parallel to it. If he is using the electric motor for position, he likes to let the wind do most of the work moving the boat. He stressed that he doesn't just “run and gun”, but works water thoroughly, and that midlake humps are excellent structures that should not be passed up.

When checking the shallows, a good Spoonplugger will always check the faster speeds first because active fish are more easily caught and it takes little time. When this doesn't work, what we often fail to do, especially in the spring, is to check the slower speeds with worms, jigs, or tubes. Our Illinois friends have demonstrated how effective a slowly worked worm can be on Hess Lake, even in the summer at times. It all boils down to checking all depths and all speeds for the most thorough presentation. We sincerely thank Grant and Terry for a most informative and interesting program.

SECOND PROGRAM

4 of the 5 from our club that went to the Illinois Spoonpluggers Winter Seminar were at the meeting and they discussed what was learned there. John Bales gave an excellent presentation on “Mapping and Interpretation” and then talked some about his attending the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame induction ceremony for Buck Perry, Virgil Ward, and others in South Carolina recently. One of his highlights was meeting and talking with Kevin VanDam, and he even got a picture with him to prove it! A booklet was handed out with 23 submitted questions and space after each to make notes on the answers given by the attendees. 10 were selected by Terry O'Malley to be answered by him on the video. One sample question was:

“When I map a structure with a slight breakline of maybe one foot, sometimes on the flasher it is very hard to see that it is a breakline. Can you give me some suggestions to help me identify these breaklines?”

Points made by the attendees included using an 8 degree transducer cone for the best definition, to turn down the sensitivity (power) of the sounder to make a finer baseline, to use needle depth finder which will show these slight breaklines by getting “nervous”, to run off the breakline faster which helps you see it better, and to check both directions as you run off or on the breakline perpendicular to it. It is important to find these slight breaklines, especially in deeper water, as they can be significant parts of fish migration routes.

There is not space or time here to review all the valuable information learned, you will just have to submit questions and attend next year!

Chase Klinesteker