

LUNKER HUNTER SPOONPLUGGERS MEETING DECEMBER 3, 2009

FISHING REPORTS

Don Stephens reported that fishing for steelhead has been slow above the dam in the last few weeks. He has caught only 3 or 4 steelhead up to 10 pounds there, but attributes the slow fishing to warmer weather. Terry Velting fished Murry Lake with Charlie but no muskie were caught. Terry fished Fremont Lake 3 weeks ago and caught a 6 pound walleye and a 6 pound pike casting blade baits deep. John Stepanovich took on the water training from John Bales on Lake Macatawa and said he had a great learning experience on how to evaluate good fishing spots. Later, on Lower Herring Lake, he examined several structures that John had pointed out which showed many fish on the sounder, just as Bales had predicted! John Jenowiak caught a 32 inch pike on Reeds Lake on a 100 Spoonplug in the SE corner of the lake. Dave Harding fished in Florida and he reminded us to have a long hook remover in the boat at all times (ask Dave why!). Tom Moore fished Fremont Lake and hooked 3 smallmouth bass to 18 ¼" from 30 feet of water. He also fished the White river casting spinners and got a 3 pound steelhead. A friend of his reported catching big fall pike from Muskegon Lake with jigs and twister tails in 8-12 feet. With the help of Charlie Myers and John Bales, Chase caught a 38inch 15 pound muskie and a 41 inch 18 pound muskie from Murry Lake in 2 trips recently. Terry Velting reported that perch are running up the rivers from the bay in the Cass City area of the thumb. Charlie Myers could not attend the meeting, but sent in this report: "Chase, Since our last meeting, I've caught 5 muskies to 43 inches, 5-6 pike to 35 inches, several anchors, a pair of gym shorts, and a 12 foot rod/reel. Also, after your fish yesterday, and mine the day before, I see the need for a longer tool to get hooks out! Have a good meeting."

MEETING

The Valentines dinner will be held at Safees' Restaurant on Friday February 12 at 6:00PM. Mike and Nyann Dordan will be coordinating this fun event, which was enjoyed by all who attended last year. We will not be collecting money beforehand, but Mike needs to know how many will be coming, so call and let him know (891-9618) if you are planning to attend! Larry recommended that the club pay for a gift for each of the ladies. Larry mentioned that we might want to designate a "target lake" each month that members could fish and evaluate, then at a meeting compile information so all could benefit. He also likes the idea of doing more studying of Buck Perrys' material for programs. He is beginning to construct a club calendar of our proposed activities.

PROGRAM

Larry Simonsen gave a very informative program on delayed fish mortality after catch and release. He emphasized that we need to pay more attention in handling fish if we release them. He had done extensive review of Internet sources, printed out and highlighted important points from many articles, and thoroughly reviewed them with us (likely the lawyer in him made him do it!). He noted from one study that after many bass tournaments, dead bass appear floating the day after, and that over ½ stayed on the bottom and did not float up right away. Spring tournaments showed a 6% mortality but summer tournaments showed 39% mortality because of the warmer water (80 degrees). Mortality is greater with the larger bass because they are less adaptable. A musky study showed a 5-30% mortality estimate with longer fights increasing mortality due to more lactic acid buildup in the fish. Too light equipment used, fishing alone, and high winds can be factors increasing fight time. A walleye study in June showed a mortality rate up to 79%. Warmer water and the fact that walleye are extra sensitive to handling may be a

factor here. How the fish are hooked can be a factor also. Walleye are often fished with live bait and can be deeply hooked and bleeding. Just because a fish swims away doesn't mean it will survive.

If releasing a fish, don't use a net, but remove the hook with the fish in the water by the boat. With any bait or lure, set the hook as quickly as possible so the fish doesn't swallow the hook. Lip hooked fish are the least traumatized. Bring in all fish as quickly as possible so they are stronger when released. Buck Perry has always emphasized that heavy enough rods, reels, and lines are essential to landing fish quickly, and not just playing with them. If you do touch a fish, wet your hands first, and don't lay them on a dry carpet or boat floor. Bending down the hook barbs will make for an easier release, especially if the hook is deeper in the fishes mouth. If you must weigh a fish, weigh it in the net. That will only take a few seconds and the weight of the net can be subtracted to give an accurate weight. To measure a big pike or musky fairly accurately, get a flexible plastic yardstick that can be placed next to the fish while it is resting in the water in the net to get the length. Taking a picture of a big pike or musky can be the most traumatic, so leave the fish swimming in the net (make sure you have a big enough net!) for a while to recuperate before you pick it up for a picture. Pike and musky are probably the most sensitive fish to handling, so make sure camera and everything is ready before the fish is lifted for a picture, which should take less than 30 seconds. Get instructions from more experienced fishermen on how to properly hold and subdue them to reduce trauma. Adequate tools can save the lives of many released fish. This includes large nets, sturdy rods, reels, and lines, long needlenose pliers, hook removers, and jaw spreaders. This was a thoroughly enjoyable program, and we thank Larry much for giving us this information!

OPEN BOARD MEETING, January 6, 2010

New president Larry Simonsen called a board meeting to discuss about club planning. From here on, board meetings will be held one week before our regular meeting (Thursday mornings 9:30AM at Cheers restaurant on Plainfield). All club members are welcome to attend, as we will be discussing club business and activities then, in order to save some time at the meetings. Larry has some great ideas to increase our clubs' activities and member participation. Don, Chase, Larry, and Jack were present. Some proposed activities included: valentines' dinner, swap night, Illinois Winter Seminar attendance, May outing at Lower Herring Lake, target lakes, club fishing night, July Muskegon Outing, other Spoonplugging outings (e.g. Leoni and Northern Indiana), day outings with picnic lunch, youth tournament, web page participation, and teaching kids and beginner fishermen about Spoonplugging. Larry is working on a club calendar for these events, and members are encouraged to give him their input (949-6955). Program ideas include night fishing, fishing in the rain, and fishing in wind. Give Larry your ideas for programs also.

Attracting new members is one of the main goals of our club, so it was thought best to get our club pamphlet out to the public more. We are running low on the pamphlets, so we will encourage members to print copies and make some available in local sport stores and businesses. A digital file of the pamphlet is attached in this E-Mail for those that want to print and distribute copies. Don will cover Vans', Chase will cover Al and Bobs', Jack will cover Brenners', and Larry will cover Gander Mountain. We encourage other members to pick a business and supply them with copies. Also, we will encourage new members to join by entitling them to go out with a current member in their boat to learn Spoonplugging. If you are a new member wanting assistance, contact Larry and he will assign a member "mentor" to help you. Jack Clark has donated Spoonplugging rods and reels to loan out to beginners so that they can try this approach to fishing.

Chase Klinesteker