

LUNKER HUNTER SPOONPLUGGERS MEETING FEBRUARY 5, 2009

FISHING REPORTS

There were few reports. Paul Stepanovich reported that they were catching browns and steelhead off the Saugatuk pier on spawn. Some perch were being caught on Muskegon Lake.

MEETING

11 were in attendance. The Valentines' Dinner was planned for Friday February 13 at Safyees' Restaurant (Note: 16 attended and all had a great time---thanks to Mike and Nyann Dordan!). 4 or 5 of us are planning to go to the Illinois Spoonpluggers' Winter Seminar on Saturday March 14. If you haven't paid your '09 dues, see Roger at the March meeting. Don't forget to put the Muskegon Outing, July 8-12, 2009, on your calendar! Call 231-726-6100 for campground reservations.

PROGRAM

"Spring Fishing" was the program subject. A handout was passed out and an article by Terry O'Malley on "Pre-Post Spawn Bass in Reservoirs" was discussed. It described the progressive movement of fish into the creek arms during the spring spawn and the structures they use in the process. Terry recommended that we not fish for bass on beds during the actual spawn, but use the structures they follow to get there. Although it is tempting to fish the beds, a successful bass spawn is a very fragile thing, and it could easily be affected by fishing there. Pre and post-spawn fishing is much better for the bass population. Those wishing to find out about the structures to concentrate on will find the article in their copy of "National Spoonplugger", May-June 2008.

Next we opened for discussion 6 opportunities for spring fishing that we have in the Grand Rapids area:

- 1) Lake Michigan trolling for brown trout and steelhead
- 2) Night trolling for walleye around the pierheads in Lake Michigan
- 3) Shallow darkwater lakes that warm early
- 4) Spring fishing in the Grand River for steelhead and walleye
- 5) Early bass catch and release
- 6) Panfishing

Dave Harding read an E-Mail he sent out on spring brown trout fishing in Lake Michigan. The law has been changed so that each person can use 3 rods when fishing. Browns and steelhead can move into the shallow troughs at shore to feed in the spring. These troughs, around 4-15 feet in depth, are formed by ice in the winter and are part of the pathways the fish use in their migrations. Slow speeds and long lines are often used.

Night fishing for walleye by trolling near the pierheads in Lake Michigan can produce some huge fish in early spring. The season for walleye does not close after March 15 in Lake Michigan as it does inland. One must be very aware of the wind and weather at this time of year, as it can be dangerous. Large slow crankbaits are generally used.

Shallow darkwater lakes will be the first to warm up in the spring and have more active fish. Hess, Duncan, Allegan, Mona, and Macatawa could be good candidates for this. Because of their dark watercolor and shallow waters, the sun warms them quicker, giving them an earlier start on the season.

Spring fishing the Grand River for steelhead and walleye can be very productive at times. Steelhead are open in the Grand River all winter but the walleye season closes March 15 there. The biggest walleye are caught below the 6th Street Dam before March 15. If one waits to fish them after May 15 when it opens again, smaller fish are usually caught. Darker water color in the river and warm runoff tend to make river fish active earlier.

Early bass catch-and-release fishing can be done on all Lower Peninsula waters including the Great Lakes from the last Saturday in April to the Friday before Memorial Day. Immediate catch and release is only allowed, although if the fish is kept in the water, only picked up for a quick photo, then released, that is acceptable.

We have many great fishing opportunities in the West Michigan area. Recognizing what are the best possibilities is important. But most important is to get out and GO FISHING!