



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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#218

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The last meeting was held October 15, 2012 at the Kendallville Public Library with 11 members and guests present.

Denny reported the musky fishing had been just so-so. He has caught a 48 inch musky recently, but most muskies have been pretty small. Bart Albright also caught a nice 44 incher recently and a 52 incher was reportedly caught on an area lake a week ago so perhaps the larger musky are beginning to get active.

Denny also reported that fall turnover is just now completing its cycle. He said many lakes have algae, bubbles and assorted crap floating on the surface indicating that the turnover is about done. Once this whole water column gets to the same relative temperature, the conditions become much more stable. Now what we need is for about a month of stable weather conditions in order to make hay before hard water conditions set in! As usual, we must contend with leaves getting stuck on the Spoonplugs...especially the belly hooks. Many Spoonpluggers remove the belly hooks this time of year in order to save themselves the aggravation.

Trolling speeds also need to be adjusted downwards.

Mike Price reported trolling speeds of between 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 mph.

John Bales has been fishing the Detroit River the past few weeks. Activity has been about the same there as around this area. Some days great and other days poor. He just completed filming another video on the Detroit River/Lake Erie with Steve Gillian. I'm not sure of the release since Steve has yet to edit. Probably sometime in mid 2013.

In the late fall, just before ice-up, it has traditionally been a very successful tactic to concentrate on smaller holes on our glacial lakes. The schools of bass seem to bunch up much tighter and are more predictable. The schools are

almost always in the deepest sections of the holes, making the schools easier to locate. Denny pointed out one of the pitfalls of trolling these small areas we must take into consideration: While trolling the deeper breaklines is the fastest way to come into contact with the schools of bass, the small areas pose a very specific problem. Many times we are turning the boat nearly all the time. This means our lures are typically out of position much of the time. There are really no good solutions to this problem. We can move in a bit in order to compensate, but this takes a lot of practice to dial in and most of the lakes we fish have dirty bottoms that prevent walking the bottom which further compounds the problem. Many times we must just find several anchoring positions and fan cast the area until the fish are found.

Denny also gave a primer on the pros and cons of both flashers and graphs.

The flashers offer real-time information on depths. The hard thing to learn on a flasher is detection of breaklines. Graphs don't offer quite the real-time speed of the flasher but do give a lot more information. Breaklines are easier to discern and depths of bait and prey fish are much easier to detect as well as depth of the thermocline.

Finally, at last year's "Buck Sez" Network Outing, we had about 15 people show up on Wednesday night, the day before we usually begin the outing. Since at least a few people always show up early, perhaps we need to add an extra day to the outing. We always set up the tents, etc on Wednesday anyway and it wouldn't take much effort to throw together a pot of chili or something else simple to feed everyone on this extra evening. What are your thoughts? We'll decide for sure at next month's meeting.

**NEXT MEETING: December 17, 2012 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.**

**" KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS "**

## Season Wrap-up Checklist

(Reprint form 2010)

If you've decided to call it quits for the winter here's a list of things to consider in preparation for the off-season as well as projects for those cold winter nights so that you're in tip-top shape for next season.

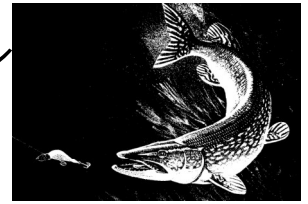
1. Pull the battery from your boat, top off with distilled water (if not sealed), give it a charge and put in a cool dry place for the winter. Test it periodically and don't let it drop below 75% of a full charge or battery will suffer from "sulfication" which renders a portion of the battery unusable..
2. Remove motor cover and spray entire motor-head with WD40, replace spark plugs. Put a small dab of white lithium grease inside the plug boot cover with a Q-tip and smear around. While you got the grease out, take that Q-tip or artists paint brush and coat with grease or other anti-corrosive agent the connections on your depth finder and other electronic connections to prevent corrosion. Pull your electronics and put them in a dry storage area. Also, pack your trailer light connections. Use an old cut off connection to act as a protective "cap" on both your vehicle trailer connection and the boat connection after anti-corrosive is applied. Check trailer wires for wear. Sometimes wires wear through at the fasteners. Electrical tape or better yet, heat-shrink sheaths will help protect wear areas. Make sure the fasteners are tight to prevent further wear. If you're really anal, you can put a thin coating of grease or anti-corrosive inside the trailer bulb sockets. Depends on how many bloody knuckles you're willing to suffer digging broken, corroded bulb connections out of those rusted sockets when the bulbs need replaced!
3. Change oil and filter in motor (if 4 stroke) and change gear lube in lower unit. Grease all pivot points on motor, pushing all old grease out. Replace or at least clean fuel filter. Also, top off fuel tank with fresh gas and add fuel stabilizer. Don't drain fuel system or gaskets will dry out and deteriorate. Some folks spray "engine tuner" through the carbs with the motor on idle to "fog" the motor for the off season. This is supposed to break down any carbon build-up and makes for better compression. Better read the manual for this procedure.
4. Replace water pump impeller every few years, depending on usage. Sand, etc. gets sucked into the water intake and gradually wears the impeller to the point it no longer adequately cools your motor to the proper temperature.
5. Prop need rebuilt? No? Are you sure you're trolling 400's & 500's?
6. Repack trailer bearings with a good white lithium grease. It holds up best for constant submersions. Got an extra set of replacement bearings to carry with you on all trips? And the tools needed to replace them in an emergency? It's cheap insurance. If you've ever had a set of seized bearings 200 miles from home....on an Interstate....on a Sunday night when NOTHING is open.... in the middle of nowhere.... you'll agree.
7. Give reels a thorough cleaning with hot, soapy water & toothbrush, dry and lubricate, put on fresh line and leave drag backed off. Might want to consider doing this job in the garage. Something about the doing this activity on the kitchen table that makes the spousal unit's anger level spike into the red zone.
8. Check rods for loose guides, and wear grooves in guides or tips. Replace if necessary. Rods are best stored by hanging from the tips.
9. Check all cordage such as anchor ropes, lure knocker and marker buoy lines. At least one marker should have a minimum of 50 feet of line to mark deep structure, use as the front rifle sight if other reference points can't be found or to simply to act as a "decoy" to throw invading fishermen off. Label markers "DNR" to prevent dimwits from picking them up (initials stand for: "Do Not Remove" in case authorities ask about the initials). Billy Crossbones label and "Poison" also works well.
10. Check lures for hooks that need to be sharpened or if rusted, replaced. Do you have enough Spoonplugs? Of course you don't, silly! Nobody does!

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# Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



We are near the end of the 2012 fall fishing season. You would have to say that this hot summer brought some of the best fish movements in a long time. You could look at fall fishing starting sometime after the first frost. This is when the surface water begins to cool and sink and the warmer water comes to the top and replaces the cold. This creates a stirring of the water so to speak, and we must look at this as a changing water condition. Mr. Perry's writings teach us that there are two conditions that control the movements of the fish. Those are the conditions of weather and water. Stability is the key to good fishing. An unstable weather condition can be understood by knowing how pre and post frontal conditions affect the fish. Mr. Perry makes this very clear how the fish may go deep and become dormant after a cold front. He also gave us the knowledge of how to control our depth's and speeds both trolling and casting so that we can still make a catch if we know enough to do so. He also went through how the lakes turn over in the fall and explains that this is also an unstable condition and the fish will be where ever conditions are most stable. The deeper water is the most stable under a changing weather and water condition. In years past, when the surface temperature gets into the 40's, starting about the second week in November, we were into the fish. Not this year. I'll say it again, not this year. When trying to find the answer to a bad fishing day, we should always look at it in terms of weather and water conditions. For most of the time, this will give you your answer. If we are dealing with a bad weather condition, and it is not the time of the year of fall turnover, it is more easily understood. When we are dealing with a changing weather conditions and then add a changing water condition, now we have double trouble. We are now near the deep freeze and the fish have still not provided us with the outstanding catches of bass and musky that we are used to having. Trying to understand exactly what is going on with the weather and water conditions is becoming ever so frustrating. For many years, I have tried to correspond with fishermen across the country and the one thing that I see is that when fishing is bad here in Indiana, it is bad in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. When we catch the fish (regardless of the season), they do also. I am talking about other Spoonpluggers of course.

Denny Coulardot told me that he was out on Loon Lake and the wind was still and he saw lots of bubbles coming up from the bottom. I went to a lake soon after and I saw the same thing on a different lake. Frank Hamill told me that in the Florida lakes, in the heat of the summer, the water gets so hot that the muck begins to bubble and create a type of gas. When this happens, Frank said that you will not catch many fish. If bubbles are coming up from our lakes, you can only assume that there is a reason but to know what is causing this, who knows. My thoughts are that it may be coming from the decayed weeds that die off and slowly end up in our main lake basins. The more that they spray the weeds, the more decaying matter that will end up in the bottom of our lakes. When man messes with Mother Nature, we have to add those things that are unnatural to our figuring out what the problem is. I have written our congresswoman Sue Glick about the weed spraying and so far, I have not heard a thing. It is very sad to see firsthand what weed control has done to our lakes and how it affects the fish. But try and prove what we know to someone else. They want proof that it is hurting the fish. This is why we will never see any efforts to stop the spraying of chemicals in our lakes. It is happening all across our country. And it is something that the lake associations can be talked into thinking that it must be done. The word invasive species is the strong word that sells the goods. You may think that I have flipped my lid because I speak so strongly against the use of chemicals in our lakes. We have all seen what it does. The worse thing that could have ever happened is that our state government gives grant money to help pay for it! Sorry you have to hear my opinion but I am pissed off!

*Good Spoonplugging*  
*John Bales*

**“ KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”**



**The more I learn, the more I see there is to learn.”** *E. L. “Buck” Perry*

### **BUCK SEZ:**

In the study of water color, we approach the subject from the same standpoint we did in Weather Conditions. That is, in terms of LIGHT. We should think of it as how much light penetrates the water. The MORE penetration, the worse the condition. The LESS penetration, the better the condition. CLEAR WATER means deep fish, short migrations, slow growth, and reproduction, increased weed and moss growth, and usually more water skiers. It means more of everything that spells trouble for you as a fisherman.

The more dingy, cloudy, or darker the water is, the better the conditions for fishing. So—a Spoonplugger will pay as much attention to his water color selection as he will the anything—gear, methods, weather, structure, etc. If the selection of water color is not considered, he is asking for troubles which may be avoided.

We are not saying that clear water does not contain fish. What we are saying is, water clarity will control or determine **how deep** fish are—where he starts from (sanctuary), **just how shallow he comes on migration, and how long he stays.**

Presentation of lures (or bait), and interpretation of the deeper structures can be very difficult. Which means, if you are “stuck” with a deep clear lake, you must take **more** time in studying the deeper structures. It means you must work **longer** and put forth **more** effort in presenting lures **more** correctly in deep water—if you expect any degree of success.

Your reaction might be: if this is so, why not fish at night only? Hold on a minute! We did not say an absence of light, as such, we said a light **condition**. We said we use light as our guide; we’re sure other factors are involved, but this does not change our original thought. If we had a clear water situation, and the fish did not move in the daytime, our “guideline” would dictate we wait for a darker condition of light to cause the fish to come **far enough** for us to make contact.

To clarify this, let’s say you are fishing a deep clear lake. If a movement occurs in the middle of the afternoon, you might not be aware of it because the fish did not migrate up to where you were fishing. If you stayed on the lake into the night, you would draw a blank, because the fish had **already moved**, and probably would not move again until the next morning.

When you are faced with deep clear lakes, fishing at night does have its good points, but it does not mean the fish will move every night, regardless what the weather and water conditions might be. At certain periods during mid-summer, the major movements may occur at night, If you are experiencing troubles in the daytime, check it at **daylight**. This should indicate the movement pattern, and you can fish accordingly. BUT you must remember, any sort of movement pattern can change overnight—it usually does—at the first weather change.

You must be aware of the fact that some species, at times **DO** move at night, and some species **DO NOT** move at night

**“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”**