



# NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 2

#208

FOUNDED 1991

February 2012

**PRESIDENT: Denny Coulardot**

**(260 ) 691-3118**

**SECRETARY: Ted Walter**

**(260 ) 495-5042**

**EDUCATION DIRECTOR: John Bales**

**(260 ) 854-3921**

The last meeting was held January 16, 2012 with 16 members present.

Denny Coulardot was still catching a few muskies due to the late arrival of ice this winter. He reported water temperatures at 32.8. Since the last meeting the ice formed for a while, but it was only a week or so before temperatures began to rise and made for unsafe ice-fishing conditions.

Due to Kendallville Library holiday closings the next two months on regular meeting nights, the meeting dates for February and March have been moved to the 2nd Monday (February 13, 2012 and March 12, 2012)

John Bales reported to having a new lure knocker that accommodates his new JB1 & JB2 lures, however, it needs just a little tweaking before it is available. I should be available before the spring season. Speaking of the need for lure knockers...it was reported that cribs had been placed in both Webster and Pretty Lakes. Hopefully their placement will not interfere too much with our trolling patterns, however, I wouldn't bet on it. Chances are they will be placed at base breaklines (if they were smart...which I also wouldn't bet on!).

John also announced new lure colors for the JB1 & JB2-white, copper, yellow and a multi-hued metal flake. All of them look pretty awesome, but the metal flake really knocks it out of the park. It looks too pretty to use! Personally, I don't care what color it is...as long as it's white!

John's monthly instructional covered depth finders, especially some of the newer units made by Humminbird and Lowrance so that we could better under-

stand the new technology used in these units. John discussed the cone angles as well as the imaging produced by the equipment and discussed the pros and cons. On the pro side, these units give you great detail. They give a Spoonplugger much more information than a flasher unit. The GPS chip from Navionics have very good lake map detail and can be very helpful when fishing unfamiliar lakes, however they don't come with this chip and must be purchased separately. It is worth the cost, however.

On the con side, both units are designed to be idiot-proof or user friendly to a certain extent. Although that may sound good, it means that the computer within the unit is doing a multitude of jobs that you, as a Spoonplugger, do not desire and therefore the whole system runs slower than Spoonplugging requirements. Most of us cut our teeth on "flasher" units which give almost instantaneous readouts. According to John, these units should NEVER be run in auto or default mode. They must be manually adjusted so that the readouts move across the screen fast enough to allow a troller to react to changing bottom conditions.

There is also the issue as to how you interpret the additional information you will receive from these units. That is a topic for future discussions!! Also, remember that a depth finder, whether a flasher or graph-type, is just another tool. You must have the knowledge to use the tools properly in order to gain the successful benefit.

**NEXT MEETING: February 13, 2012 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.**

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

### **Photo Tips**

The following is a reprint of tips I received on-line several years ago from Spoonpluggers concerning photographing fish for our newsletters. I got back some great suggestions. Many of the same tips came from different people, so I have tried to condense them into what you see below:

Always try to take the picture of your subject with the sun in their face (and to your back, being mindful of your own shadow!) This gives you full advantage of the natural light. You can lose color and detail by shooting the photo into the sun.

**ALWAYS-ALWAYS-ALWAYS USE A FLASH.** By using a flash, even in bright daylight, you will enhance the colors and remove shadows from the subjects face.

**LOSE THE SUNGLASSES.** Sunglasses are important to save your eyes from ultraviolet light, but they do nothing for making a good fish picture. Have your subject tilt their cap or hat back if they must keep it on in order to not throw a shadow on the eyes/forehead. The eyes tell a whole lot about the person's mood and they may have just caught that fish-of-a-lifetime. You want to let their eyes and smiles tell the story.

Take the time to compose your shot, if possible. Put the fish in the livewell for the moment and plan the shot. (Unless you are keeping the fish. (This may not apply to muskies or northerns or other species that might experience greatly reduced odds for survival the longer they remain out of water) Remember, you cannot duplicate the effort afterwards if you realize you did not get a good photo.

Frame your shot before you retrieve the fish from the livewell and rehearse with your subject how you plan to shoot the picture. Look for a photo-enhancing backdrop. Look through the camera viewer and beware of the background. Scan what's in back of the subject; power lines, trees that might appear to poke out of the subject's head, jet trails, etc. You don't want anything to detract from the fish or the fisherman/woman.

Most of us shoot too far away! Fill the view-finder with your subject and the fish. We don't often care what kind of boots or shoes they're wearing!

Take time to check that shirts are on and buttoned. Get rid of cigarettes, soft drink cans, etc!

Check the settings on your camera and make certain you are ready. OK, time to take the pictures. Get the fish and get the subject back in place as rehearsed. Have the subject hold the fish up and look at the fish, NOT at the photographer. You probably won't have to remind him/her to smile, but it's tradition!

**DON'T-DO NOT-EVER-EVER HOLD THE FISH OUT AT ARM'S LENGTH FROM YOUR BODY.** First off, it does not fool anybody. Second, it looks silly. You can hold the fish approximately 1/3 of your arm length away from your body without looking silly. Remember, the hand holding the fish gives the size away every time

As a picture taker, you can stoop down lower than your subject or have the subject stand on the casting deck. By shooting the picture at a ***slightly upward angle***, you increase the focal plane (makes the fish LOOK longer, without calling the viewer's attention to the 'trick' you're playing.) Be careful, *be very careful*, you can have TOO much of an angle which will end up looking silly again! Make certain your camera is level with the background.

Move quickly, but carefully and take several pictures. The odds of getting a good one increase by doing so. You're only going to get this one chance with that fish. Make the most of it. It's better to err on the side of extra copies than to not have any good pictures.

This is almost cheating, but it makes a great picture so I'll include it. When you catch a medium-size fish, 3-4-5 pound bass or 10-15 pound northern, have a child hold the fish. Makes the fish look gigantic!

Lastly, let's assume that you catch a possible World, State, Line Class "RECORD FISH". There are some very specific steps you need to take:

**DON'T SUBMIT THE PHOTOS AT THE ANGLES ALLUDED TO ABOVE! OFFICIALS WILL NOT BE IMPRESSED! DO FOLLOW THE OTHER GUIDELINES AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE ROD AND THE LURE YOU CAUGHT THE FISH ON IN THE PHOTO.**

**CUT OFF APPROXIMATELY 10 FEET OF LINE TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR APPLICATION.**

**BE SURE TO GET AS MANY WITNESSES AS YOU CAN TO THE CATCHING AND THE WEIGHING OF THE FISH.**

**BE SURE TO WEIGH THE FISH ON A "STATE CERTIFIED" SCALE AND GET THE OWNER/EMPLOYEE'S HOME INFORMATION ALONG WITH THE BUSINESS'S INFORMATION.**

**BE SURE TO GET THE STATE CERTIFICATION NUMBER FROM THE SCALES.**

**WEIGH THE FISH ONCE AND ONLY ONCE.**

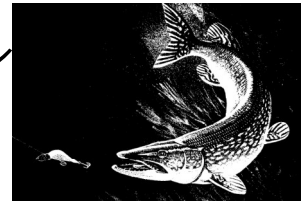
**Many record fish have been disallowed for not following these guidelines.**

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



# *Good Spoonplugging*

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



We are having a mild winter to say the least. Lakes are frozen but not safe with most still having open water but not able to put a boat in for some real fishing. You need to be thinking about what lakes you want to fish and how you will go about fishing them. If you are after the bass, you will need to cast. At first, the bass will be close to their sanctuary depths and you will need to anchor down on those spots that you can reach most all of the deep water with one or two anchoring positions. This will require that you do some homework looking at your lake maps. The water will be around 40 degrees and to make a fish take, you will be required to put the lure in his face. Fan casting the different jump lures like the silver buddy type and if that is too fast, you will have to go to a 1/4 oz or even a 1/8 oz jig with some type of soft plastic trailer.

If you have access to any old fishing facts magazines, I would suggest that you look for any articles that were written by a guy named Tony Portincaso. I think the spelling of his last name is not correct but it is close. Denny Coulardot taught me how to cast a weedline which takes as much practice or more than learning how to troll. How and when to use all of the different type lures in and around the weeds to take care of the active or non active fish at the particular time that we are on the water. Mr. Perry said that we need to learn how to troll and cast. The trolling locates the fish and the casting is how we catch the mother load. There is a time that both will shine. Trolling is our teacher. It will tell us where to cast and when. The situation that we are faced with will dictate what tools to use on the cast which will put the most fish in the boat. When weeds are present, and the fish are in and around the weeds (during the pre-spawn and spawn), the trolling will not allow us to get our lures in and around all the little twists and turns in the weedline. We must do this on the cast! In order for us to accomplish this, we must have lures or tools which will allow us to control our depths and speeds in and around the weeds. The lures we need must allow us to strain the water, just like we control our depths and speeds while trolling when weeds are not present. How can we check the water in any other way? A short list of tools would be rattletrap style lures, crankbaits with short and long lips to run different depths. Silver buddy type lures and heavier jigs for the outside of the weedline. And maybe a hand full of suspending jerk baits and some lighter jig heads for the inside of the weedline. Soft plastics would include erie darters and tubes plus trailers for our rubber legged jigs. Any rubber legged jig would be purchased from my friend Wade Brinkman simply because he makes the best jigs in the country..... period. You can bother him any time at Custom Bass Jigs.com.

I have just given you some really good guidelines on what you need to do to catch the bass during the pre-spawn and spawn period. Mr. Perry was asked why he did not talk much about this type of fishing in the spring.

His comments were that any damned fool can catch fish this time of the year! That's what he said!

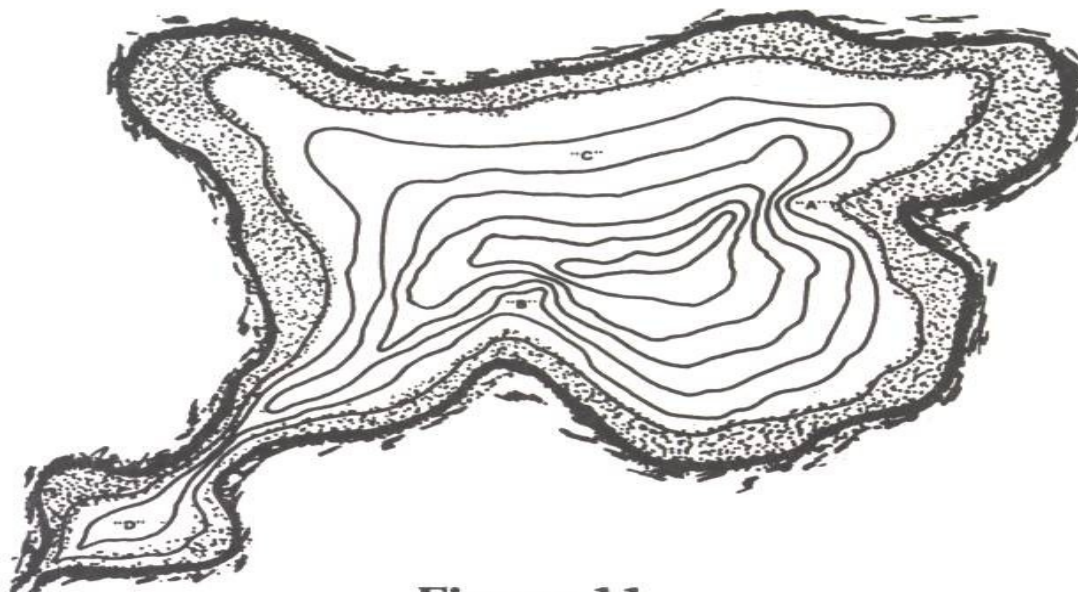
*Good Spoonplugging*  
*John Bales*

**“ 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:**



**Figure 11**

Figure 11 is a top view of a **natural** lake, and it contains a variety of fish—bass, walleye, northern pike, etc. When viewing the migration of fish from a **SEASONAL** point of view, it is somewhat different from that found in reservoirs. This does not imply the habits and instincts of fish are different, but in most natural lakes the **STRUCTURES USED DO NOT CHANGE, BUT WILL REMAIN THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE SEASON**. However, if by chance your natural lake has the same features as discussed in the reservoir—short structure—steep shorelines, etc., then the same principle would apply. Those natural lakes with a stream flowing through, such as a lake chain and some wider sections of streams at times called lakes, often have features as found in reservoirs.

Figure 11 shows the contour and structure available in a natural lake. Added to this is a shallow channel or slough leading off to a small expanse of water. This could be a small shallow lake connected to the main lake by a narrow channel.

The deepest water in the lake is a large section in the center of the larger body of water. This would be the home of the fish (winter or summer). In studying the structure available, there are two main structures in the form of a bar (A & B). The section marked “C” has no well-defined structure, breakline, nor breaks. It is a flat, sloping bottom. The **breaklines** that occur on structures A and B are the only “steep” bottoms available. Thus they would be the **shortest** route to shallower water for limited or scattered migrations—just like the steeper sections of a reservoir. These would give the fish an immediate drop-back or access to the **deepest** water. So, in early season, and pre-spawn season, these steeper sections of the structure would be used.

As the pre-spawn season approaches, it is highly probable that in certain weather and water conditions, some fish may migrate for short periods into the feeder channel leading to the backwaters of the slough or small shallow lake. The possibility of this would increase as the spawning season approaches.

In the overall picture, the two main structures (A & B) would be considered as the main migration routes for both cold and warm seasons. In the colder pre-spawn period, the deeper breaks and breaklines would receive the **SHORT, SCATTERED, UNPREDICTABLE** migrations. As the season progresses, the movements should become better and better and be more to the shallow portions of the structures. During the spawning season, the most productive shallow places in the lake should be in the near shallows of those two main structures. If the lake has a slough or a small channel leading off into a bay, or a small section such as “D”, then this too should be checked. After the spawning season, the same main structures (A & B) would receive the migration as per weather and water conditions that exist.

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