



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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The last meeting was held November 18, 2013 at the Kendallville Public Library with 14 members present.

Dan King, who is a pretty avid lure collector (has a great collection of older Spoonplugs) brought in a few vintage Len Hartman musky lures. If you want to know anything about the history of Spoonplugs, he has about as much knowledge as anyone you can find!

Fishing reports were not very good. John reported that so far this fall has been more dismal than last fall and last fall was awful. Denny reported only catching about one musky per week this year. Past years would have been several per day!

Denny attributed last year's poor fall fishing to low water due to drought conditions, however this year the water table is about normal and the fishing is still off from past catches. Normally, the fall is one of the best, if not the best time of year to make good catches. What is wrong?? Weather and water conditions have not been the greatest, but when has fall not been fraught with unstable weather conditions? Warm weather lasted much later than average which may have some effect. And weed spraying later in the year is still coming under a bit of suspicion, but no one seems to be able to pinpoint exactly why catches are way off the past two years. Spoonpluggers are used to having the answers to fishing problems and it is very frustrating to be scratching our heads at this time of year. Perhaps things will improve from now until ice up and it will be butterflies and rainbows everywhere. Let's hope so.

Both Denny and John have not been seeing fish shallower than about 20 feet. Movements have been short, only about 15 or 20 minutes and have been taking place about midday. The movements and timing IS normal for this time of year. Denny believes, and John agrees, that sunny days in the fall seems to produce better results than overcast days. The opposite is certainly true for the summer, but in the late fall, the sun appears to out perform. Perhaps with the colder water temperatures, the production of phytoplankton increases during sunny conditions which produces food for zooplankton, which produces food for baitfish, which...well you get the idea. That's my theory and I'm sticking to it....at least until I see better evidence!

John went over his one and only good day in the last month on a lake that normally produces consistent catches and explained why certain areas of the lake produce better results. The season migrations elude many fishermen and John went over the typically overlooked areas.

John explained that prior to ice up (and undoubtedly up until spring) the fish seem to knot up into tighter groups in the fall and IF you can find them, there seems to be fierce competition. If you can wake one of them up and get them going, you can make a good catch in a hurry.

Just a heads-up, dues of a book of stamps will be due the first of the year.

NEXT MEETING: December 16, 2013 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.

“ KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”

Season Wrap-up Checklist

(Reprint from 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 open-water season.

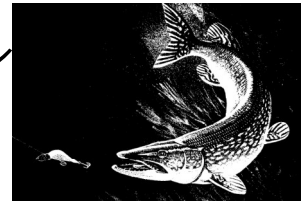
1. Pull the battery(s) from your boat, top off with distilled water (if not sealed), give it a charge and put in a cool dry place for the winter. Test it about once a month and don't let it drop below 75% of a full charge or battery will suffer from "sulfication" which renders a portion of the battery 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 which is extra important due to new fuel formulas. 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. Consider replacing 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? Must not be trolling 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 work well.
10. Check lures for hooks that need to be sharpened or replaced. Do you have enough Spoonplugs? Of course you don't, silly! Nobody does!

" KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS "



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor

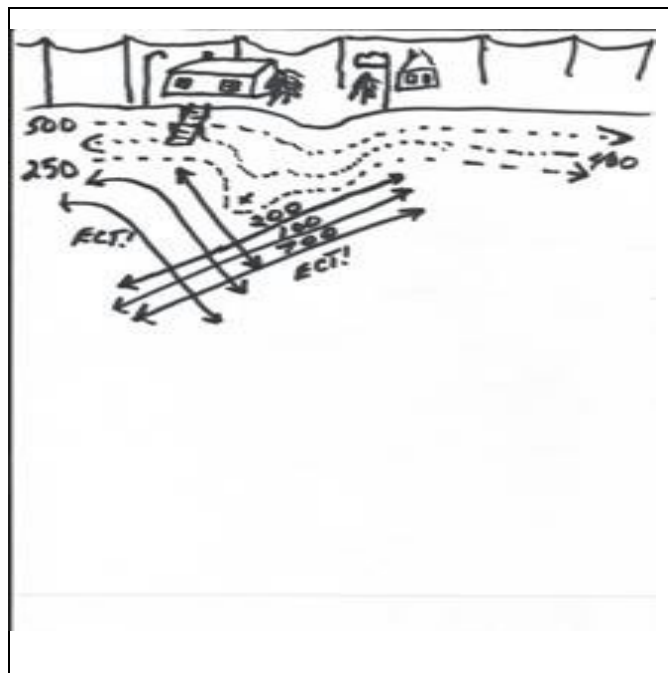


Take a look at the figure before you read on please. The whole ball of wax is all right there in this basic drawing. First of all, you notice that you first must learn how to troll the shallows with the first three size lures and keep them in the depth of water that they are made to run in. If that is done, you will contour troll and if you do it right, you will begin to see any features and find out their shape. By the time you are done with the 250, you will see enough to throw a marker and then straight line passes can be made. I am not trying to bore you with repetition of the thousands of times that we have talked about the learning in this manner. Everything that you need to know and what you will learn by sticking to these basics is all that is needed to make you a pretty good Spoonplugger.

It doesn't matter if this is your first day of learning or in your 20th season, if you go about your fishing in this manner, you will find the fish in the shortest amount of time. You will be aware of any fish movements. You will constantly be reminded of the importance of depth and speed control. You will understand how fish move on structure and how the weather and water controls these movements. You will know when it is time to go to the cast and what to cast. You will learn to throw markers and use shoreline sightings. I have even given you some shoreline sightings on the bank just in case you catch a fish or need one to make a trolling pass or to let you know where you are so you don't get lost. It is all there on this one simple drawing.

You do not leave this spot until you know exactly where the contact point is. One more thing. When making the pass with the 500 and 400 series, you may want to pay a little attention so you don't run into that pier!

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:

Whenever the movement occurs, early or late, in the middle of the day or night it does not necessarily mean that any two movements will be for the same distance or for the same length of time. How far the fish go and how long they stay is controlled by the weather and water conditions at that particular time. No matter how many times, or periods, we go fishing, we are not likely to find the same conditions twice.

When migration occurs, the fish move up these structures, using the bottom features as their guide. If conditions are good, they move up to the eight to ten foot depth. If conditions are very good, some will then scatter into the shallows. When fish scatter into the shallows along the shoreline, the fisherman becomes aware of it, as this is the time he says, “The fish are biting.”

At certain times of the year, spring mostly, the fish may remain for some time in the shallows, and they may move as far as the bays, coves, flats, etc. However, most of the season they are in the shallows in quantity for only a short period of time, and the distance they scatter will not be very great; thus, the productive shoreline can be very short.

The first fish to appear in the shallows will be the smaller “yearling” fish. If yearling bass are caught in the shallows this usually means a movement, and the larger fish could be at a reachable depth, on structure, in the near area.

Usually, though, the migration of the larger fish does not extend quite to or past the scatter point (eight to ten feet). This is particularly true if the school contains the biggest bass found in the waters of the area.

Never expect this entire school of large fish to move into the shallows and scatter at the same time. In all of our fishing, we have never seen more than two or three move in at one time. You have probably fished the shoreline at some time and found the bass really biting. But how many **big** fish did you catch? The reason you caught only a few, or none, perhaps was not due to any fault of yours, nor was it due to the fact that these large fish were wise “ole birds.” It was due to the fact the fish were not there.

North or south, some fish live longer, grow faster, and obtain a final weight above the average, but normally largemouth bass will die off by the time they reach six pounds. In most areas of the country, the average life span in relation to the average growing rate will **normally produce some schools whose average weight is slightly under six pounds.** But whatever the average final weight, if any “lunkers” exist in the area, they will be with this group. A group (or school) could be all one size (2 lbs., 3 lbs., 4 lbs., etc.) or the school could contain several sizes.

“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”