



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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The last meeting was held January 21, 2013 at the Kendallville Public Library with 11 members and guests present.

NOTE: Due to scheduling problems at the Kendallville Public Library, our next meeting will be the 2nd Monday rather than the 3rd. February 11, 2013-6:30 P.M.

We welcomed Kevin Echterling of LaGrange and Kim Galloway of Wolcottville, both newcomers to Spoonplugging. Kevin is just beginning to read the "Green Book", but is enthusiastic about Spoonplugging.

Denny reported that the fishing still sucks! That has been a common theme throughout the fall. Most lakes have only partially iced up and remain a bit dangerous. High winds have caused many lakes to remain open, and temperatures are from near zero to 60 degrees in a matter of a few days. Not exactly stable conditions!

With a couple of new people attending, Denny explained breaks and breaklines and how they appear using both a graph and a flasher for a depth meter. Detecting the presence of breaklines presents a challenge to us all, but it is especially challenging to those just starting out. The flasher allows us to "see" the bottom in as close to real-time as possible. The graphs, not so much, as graphs take a few seconds to turn sonar pings into readable images on the screen. Graphs tend to show breaklines in a much more discernible way than detecting them with a flasher for beginners, however, with a little practice, anyone can learn to identify breaklines with a flasher if they know what to look for. Breaklines are typically found by running off a structure situation at a right angle in order to get the profile and distinguish the depths at which the

breakline(s) occur. Our flashers tend to have narrower transducer cone (usually 9 degree) meaning we are looking at a much more "homed-in-on" version of the bottom. Most graphs have a 20 degree cone so that we are "looking" at a wider area. As we attempt to follow a breakline parallel around a structure such as a bar or straight line passes off the end and sides, the lower degree transducer cone will allow for a much more accurate reading.

Graphs, on the other hand, can give us a great deal more information on what is going on below the water's surface than could be obtained with a flasher. This is why many Spoonpluggers have both flasher and graph. Many graphs also have a flasher mode enabling the Spoonplugger to have just one unit. It would be hard to advocate one over the other since they are typically used in different situations. The thing to keep in mind is that a depth meter is a tool. It has no hooks and therefore will not catch fish! It can only help you catch fish if used in the proper manner! The information it provides is only as good as your interpretation of the information it provides. It takes patience and practice to get the most out of any tool.

Don't forget the following upcoming outing:

Illinois Spoonpluggers Winter Seminar

Elk Grove Village, IL

March 16, 2013

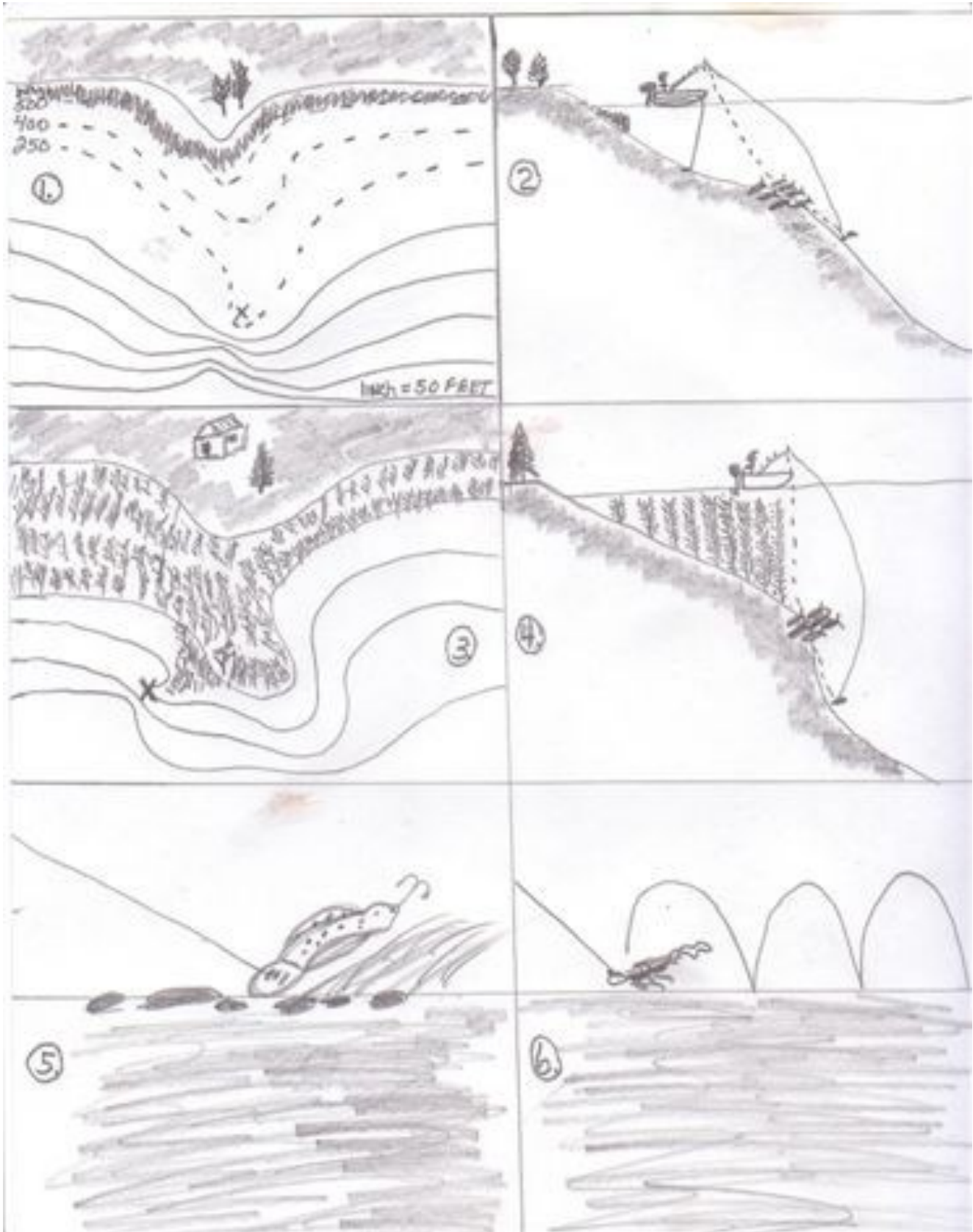
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NEXT MEETING: February 11, 2013 at the Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.

" KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS "

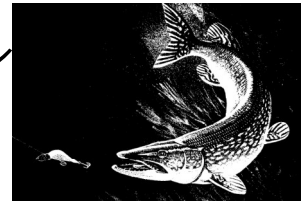


“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



The ultimate goal for all Spoonpluggers is to get into a school of big bass and have them coming every cast. For those who have done this, you know how fast and furious the catching can be. We must keep the fish in a feeding frenzy or the school will be gone in a hurry and our efforts will be for nothing. A lost fish or two, the wrong choice of lure to control our depth and speeds or the wrong boat position and the chance of loading the boat is lost. Getting into a school of big bass is very rewarding to the fisherman. Once it happens, there is a self motivation that will last until the next group of fish is found. Every situation is different. Every one must be thought out as to how best to present your lures to the fish to keep them in a feeding frenzy. This time frame of thought has to be done in a hurry while the fish are at a certain spot and active. A lot is involved in a very short period of time. Mr. Perry lists water colors in terms of what is best and then it gets worse from there. This is to inform us what to expect if we intend to spend a lot of time on the clear bodies of water or the success that we may have by searching out the lakes with good water color.

We could list casting positions in what is best and add some things that make the actual catching of the fish worse. In figure 1 (top view) and figure 2(side view), we have an ideal situation for getting into the casting position and making a big catch. The water color is a dark yellow green. We have located a bar and have thrown a marker on the tip of the finger that has a sharper break into the deepest water. On our very first straight line pass across the tip of the bar, we hit a good bass on a 200. The fish is landed quickly and it was noticed that the lure was very close to the marker when the fish took and jumped. The boat is quickly anchored near the marker and we begin fan casting with a 100. On our third cast we make contact with the school and we are in business. Fourteen casts in a row we land a bass from 4lbs to 6 3/4lbs. On the fifteenth and sixteenth cast we draw a blank. Right away we pick up another rod with a heavy jump type lure and catch two more fish before it is over. This is a picture perfect situation for a great catch and it may happen often here. What is in our favor here? Good water color. A shallow or non existent weedline. The depths involved allows for easy presentation of lures. A hard and clean bottom allows us to walk a Spoonplug and have control of our depth and speed at the same time. All of these combined makes this place a consistent fishing hole where we can have success.

Let's make things worse. Figures 3 (top view) and 4 (side view) are of a bar in a natural lake where the water is clear. We now have a 20 foot weedline. The weeds could also be submerged trees or stumps. We have located a nice bar and on the left side there is a nice finger which breaks off into the deepest water. We have thrown a marker on the end of the finger a few feet up into the weeds. On our very first straight line pass with a 700 our lure ticks the tip of the weedy finger and a good bass takes. We are quite sure that the fish took very near our marker so as soon as the fish is landed we waste no time in getting the boat positioned and go directly to the cast. We must think this over in how we must place the boat so that we have the same control of depth and speed as we did on the troll. The boat is positioned directly over the outside edge of the weeds about a boat length back from the tip of the weedy finger which will allow us to make the correct cast. A 700 or 800 are chosen and the cast is made and allowed to sink all the way to the bottom. We are trying to duplicate what we just did on the troll and that is what made the fish take in the first place. The line is sunk and a couple of reel turns are made to take the bow out of the line. A quick and steady retrieve is started and we feel the lure bumping and on the second bump we are totally fouled with a heavy stringy moss. We know that this type of control cannot be had so we quickly switch to a heavy jump type lure. In six casts we get three bites and catch two more good fish before the action is over.

Let's go back to figure one and two. We hit a good fish on the 200 on our first straight line trolling pass. Due to the lack of weeds, we are able to anchor the boat slightly shallower than we hit the fish and by fan casting we have no trouble finding the fish. There is no wall of weeds to get in the way, the bottoms are hard and clean and our depths and speeds can be controlled at the same time. Our boat positioning could be off a little and as long as we can reach the fish on the cast and walk the lure through them, we may still make a catch. We can't say the same for figures 3 and 4. The deep heavy weedline limits us to more of an exact anchoring position to present the lures correctly on the cast. If we are off just a little, our casts cannot be made on the money. We are limited to counting down our free swimming, bottom bumping lures and trying to tick the weeds without touching the mossy bottom. This is a difficult and timely task. A jump type lure is in order but will not give a control that will keep the fish in a frenzy. Figures 5 (a bottom bumping lure) and figure 6 (a jump type lure) are shown because these are our choices of lures when going to the cast. It cannot be over stated that the Spoonplug is the only lure that when cast and retrieved at a fast speed that will keep the fish in a feeding frenzy. The Spoonplug should be the first choice for casting in any fishing situation. Only after checking with the correct size Spoonplug for the situation should a jump type lure be used.

There are many factors that determine if fish are caught on the cast after hitting the fish on the troll. How well the structure situation is interpreted. The use of markers (before the trolling passes are made) and after a fish is hooked. And finally, proper positioning of the boat. The right cast cannot be made if the boat is not in the right spot.

You will want to be totally prepared for when a school of fish is found. It can be a real pleasure! 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:

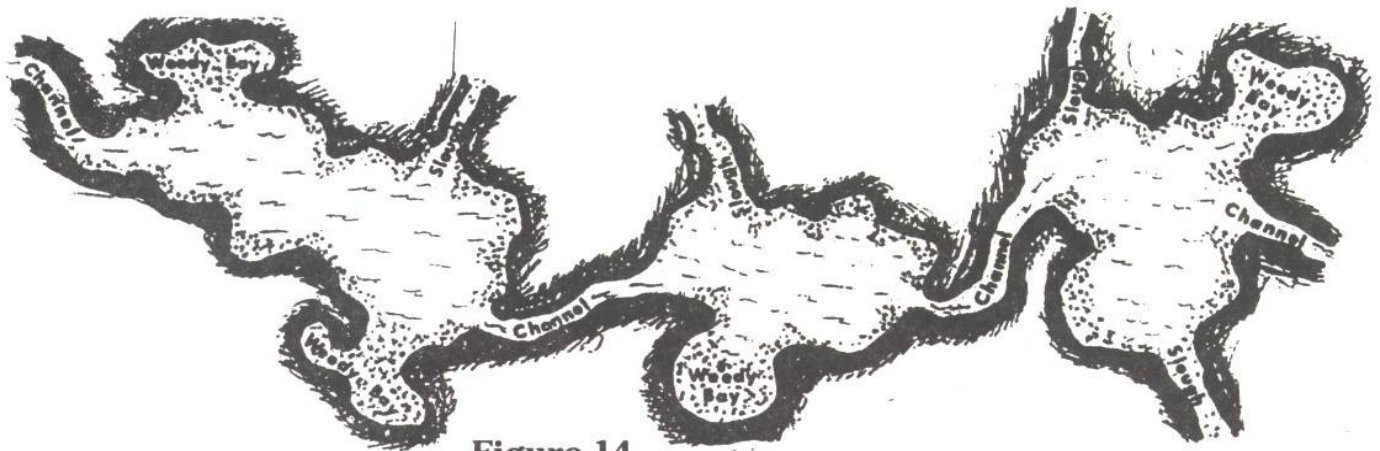


Figure 14

When viewing northern pike from a seasonal standpoint, there are things worthy of note. The pre-spawning or spawning period will find northern in the weedy bays and sloughs. Figure 14 shows a “chain” or series of lakes. The weedy bays and sloughs are noted. The northern will spawn earlier than most fish in the lake. **After spawning, the main structures and breaklines in the lake would be worked as with any other species.**

Another thought concerning northern in a series of lakes such as this is their apparent mass movement from one lake to another during the warmer part of the season. Large concentrations of big northern may show up in a lake during a certain period and fishing can be terrific for a week or more. Then the action slows in this particular lake, and the fish start showing up in the lake above, and later on in the lake above that one, and so on. When in a given area, these fish will use the structures present. Apparently, they make the return journey—as the next season, the movements starts all over again in the same lake at approximately the same period.

Fishermen who fish primarily for this species, and who fish water of this nature (Lake chain) would be wise to study this yearly migration fully. A definite pattern of date periods may not be possible, as the migration would be controlled by the weather and water conditions that exist, and very few years would be the same. But a good enough pattern could be secured to keep the fisherman in the most likely spots.

Many fishermen consider the northern pike a cold water fish. This is true, to a certain extent, as he is active in colder water, often being the target of the “ice fisherman.” But, it would be well to note, the best action occurs during the hottest periods of the year. Casting for northern can be effective, especially when they are in the shallows. But, to consistently catch BIG northern in numbers, trolling the deeper weedlines, breaklines, and drop-offs with appropriate lures is the way to go for most of the season.

When thinking of muskie, we change our view very little from that of the northern. Except in certain reservoirs, the shallower headwater sections will be prime spawning areas. After the water warms, they move back to the deeper sections. In the case of muskie, his deepwater sanctuary may be much deeper—and as he gets larger, he becomes more reluctant to move to shallow waters. His migration will be shorter and for less time. Where bass may have their “shallow” deepwater sanctuary, in 30-35 feet of water, muskie at the same time may have his at 45-55 feet if available. Big muskie are very reluctant to move shallow except during spawning period. After spawning, big muskie in the shallows become few and far between. If a particular lake had several deep holes with different depths, the muskie fisherman should concentrate his efforts around the deepest one for most of the season. Here again, lures trolled at deep breaklines will shoot to pieces the myth that muskies are difficult to catch.

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