



NORTHERN INDIANA SPOONPLUGGER

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The last meeting was held March 17, 2014 at the Kendallville Public Library with 15 members present.

Denny and several others reported that there is still LOTS of ice on the lakes and panfish are still being caught. Ice on many lakes is in excess of 20 inches. Denny also reported that the DNR are concerned that collection of musky eggs and sperm this year is in jeopardy due to the thickness of the ice. They fear the musky will have already spawned by the time the ice is off the lakes. The typical spawning time for northern Indiana is the 2nd week in April. The DNR have imported eggs and sperm from the Wisconsin DNR in the past when they began introducing muskies in the 1970's however, the upper Midwest is in the same boat as Indiana and they may also be unable to collect musky eggs and sperm this year as well. As a result, stocking of lakes may be skipped this year. We don't seem to be "springing forward" very fast this year although most of the ice has melted in smaller shallower area lakes, but some ice still remains on some of the larger, deeper lakes.

Mike Whirrett passed out the received bulk order of Spoonplugs and accessories from Buck's Baits . It looked like a pack of wolves on a deer carcass!

John Bales reminded the members of the upcoming Illinois Spoonpluggers 12th Annual Winter Seminar on Saturday March 29, 2014. John will be giving a talk on Mapping and Interpretation.

John discussed fishing the St Joseph River. (The westward flowing one that goes through Elkhart

Mishawaka, and South Bend and on into Lake Michigan.) The river's headwater begins at Baw Beese Lake in Hillsdale, Michigan and flows through southern Michigan, into Indiana, then back into Michigan before emptying into Lake Michigan. (Just 5 miles from the headwaters, is the headwaters of the "other" St Joseph River that flows eastward into Lake Erie...after meeting the other two rivers in Fort Wayne.)

There are 17 dams on the river each creating a miniature reservoir. Since there are only a few reservoirs in the Indiana, John says these small reservoirs are in our own backyard and are important beginners reservoirs for our membership in order to get acquainted with some of the features found in the larger reservoirs encountered in states such as Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi which are all within a day's drive from Northern Indiana.

John went over what features to look for, both on the shoreline which should give us clues as to what we will find below the water and indicate where to concentrate our efforts in order to find the most productive areas.

By tackling these smaller reservoirs, we will be prepared to take on the larger reservoirs without being intimidated by their size.

In my estimation, natural lakes may be intoxicating, but reservoirs are positively addictive!

**NEXT MEETING: April 21, 2014 at the
Kendallville Public Library 6:30 P.M.**

" KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS "

ALL ABOUT NORTHERN PIKE

At the last meeting, Shawn Nicodemus passed out a few pages of information on northern pike. I'm not sure of the attribution of the information but there were several things I thought were worth mentioning.

DISCLOSURE: I determined from reading the information that it was written by a fish biologist. I have great respect for fish biologists and believe they do important work in keeping our fisheries maintained as well as their budgets permit. However, many fish biologists are not as avid fishermen as many Spoonpluggers and personal experience leads me to question some of their conclusions. Whenever possible I researched additional studies for verification as well as additional information:

SPAWNING

The spawn is triggered by both internal stimuli (hormonal) as well as external stimuli (temperature, increased light, weather & water conditions, etc.) The hormones are the overriding force which put fish in the shallows for the spawn despite their nature to remain in more friendly (stable) waters for most of the rest of the year. They are the first to spawn unless there are musky present, and spawn soon after ice-out. And of course the larger pike are the first to arrive for the spawn followed by increasingly smaller ones. Very few (1%) of 2 year olds spawn. Most of the spawners are 3-5 years old. Only 15 percent of those over 5 years old still spawn. They can travel great distances to reach spawning grounds. In river systems they can travel as much as 25 miles or more.

Some biologists are of the opinion that the pike are constant wanderers, moving restlessly from place to place. This may *seem* to be the case, however, it makes sense that they would have movements and migrations only to the extent that it has a survival advantage. I can't buy that they just wander around for recreational value.

MIGRATIONS

Here's something I found surprising: Large pike move more than smaller pike. I would have thought just the opposite. In checking with other sources that used radio telemetry the consensus indicates that the larger pike **do** have a higher rate of activity than the smaller pike.

DIGESTIVE RATE

Northern pike feed **on average** of once every 48 hours in the summer and on average once every 12 days in the winter.

MISCELLANEOUS

Northern pike along with yellow perch are the most survival-able of low oxygen environments. They can sustain long periods of low level oxygen down to 0.25 mg/liter whereas bluegill will die off at twice that level. There are only rare instances of winterkills involving northern pike.



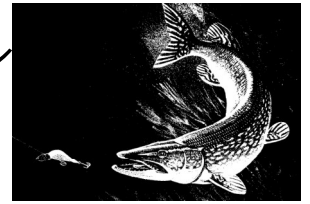
Shawn Nicodemus with some early season fish caught on the St. Joseph River on April 6, 2014.

“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”



Good Spoonplugging

By John Bales, Spoonplugging Instructor



I have watched fishermen for a long time now. All of my knowledge has come from Mr. Perry's study material. Even what I have learned from others can be related to and all falls back on that Mr. Perry said it first. All great Spoonpluggers have a few things in common. They want the fishing knowledge and the success that Mr. Perry said would come if they put forth the effort. They are self motivated. The one thing that I have learned along the way is that you cannot make a person do something that he does not want to do.

Becoming a good troller requires that all of Mr. Perry's guidelines be taken as the truth and followed to a tee. Markers, shoreline sightings, and drawing maps are some of the tools a Spoonplugger must use in order to understand the basics and will keep you from getting lost. The more time you spend on the water, the more the process of eliminating the unproductive waters becomes routine. The more you practice this with a lot of time on the water, the easier the whole ball of wax becomes.

If you fish from the time that the ice comes off up to the time that it comes back on, you will learn that fish do certain things, not only on a daily basis, but also as conditions change constantly, you must be able to adapt to these changes. The more that you fish, the more you are able to see what fish do seasonally, and this knowledge can be used the rest of your life. Weather and water conditions controls what the fish do. The amount of time that you spend on the water will dictate how much knowledge you gain and what you can control in order to catch the fish.

Mr. Perry gave us all of the knowledge. He did not tell you how hard you will have to work to gain it all!!!!!!

Most have still not realized what kind of effort needs to be put into this in order to catch a fish with a pea-sized brain.

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:

Just don't forget that clear water can mean the movements are not as predictable; they occur deeper, for a shorter distance, and for less time than those in water of less clarity. It is for this reason, we consider the selection of water color as the most important thing you can do to make a good catch. You can't control the weather, the water conditions, the movements of the fish or his appetite, BUT you can control, in most instances, the water color.

In time, a good Spoonplugger can work out ANY water. If it's clear, it takes a little longer. He will work hard and become good in his interpretation and presentation.

Fortunately, the fisherman does not have to limit himself to just clear conditions. He usually has a choice of different bodies of water, or the SEASONAL CHANGES in water color that occur in both natural and man-made lakes.

In natural lakes there is a degree of change due to algae growth, pollution, boat activity, wind and rain run-off. In artificial reservoirs there is a seasonal change, and in addition, very few reservoirs exist that do not have different water color in different areas. Normally, the upper part of a reservoir will have darker color due to the feeder streams. A good rule to follow is to move toward the headwaters of the main channel or feeder streams when seeking darker water. This could also be true when the reverse is desired.

There are, however, some areas where a fisherman does not have access to a great variety of water. He is limited to water in his area that does not change during the season—a stabilizing water color. If this is a problem, he should realize it and fish accordingly. For instance, if the only available water is clear and deep, he knows from the study how light affects fish, he would have to expect the fish to be deep most of the time, and he would have to present the lures properly. If this proves too difficult, he would put the emphasis on picking the right weather conditions, such as cloudy, hazy, or rainy days; or fish early or late. Or at night so the clear water is partially offset by the darker conditions.

Most of the time we will be faced with too much clarity. But, in some sections of the country at certain periods of the year, we may face water which is too muddy. The entire lake may be affected, but still, some sections will have a greater degree of clarity (less muddy) than others. Most of the time the problem is not finding waters with more clarity, but rather **finding more dingy areas**. Your selection of water color will have a definite bearing on your catches. It could spell the difference between catching fish or not catching fish. It will determine whether or not fishing is easy or tough.

“KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS ”