

# “WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A GREAT FISHERMAN?”

By Chase Klinesteker



An Example of Persistence 11/09/96, went fishing and caught a bunch!

In **September 2005**, I had the great fortune to spend **4 days fishing** for muskies in the Saint Clair River and Lake Saint Clair **with John Bales**. I consider John to be a great fisherman, one of our best Spoonpluggers. **Observing what he did and how he did it** revealed some **qualities** that appear **necessary** to attain the **level of fishing skill** that he possesses. There may be much more involved, but I made some **observations that I hope will help others** to improve their fishing.

## **THE DESIRE TO EXPLORE AND LEARN NEW WATERS.**

The Saint Clair River and Lake Saint Clair are big waterways covering many miles. John was eager to find and fish the best possible structures in the system. One day we covered about 50 miles of water, checking the best looking areas. Trolling was done at a fairly high rate of speed in order to cover more water. Straight sections of river were passed up for more prominent structures (islands, bends, etc.). The best “fishing water” was selected and fished more thoroughly.

## **THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF FISH BEHAVIOR, STRUCTURES, WEATHER, ETC.**

Knowledge about fish, their behavior, and their environment is critical to becoming better at catching them. Buck Perrys’ book “Spoonplugging—Your Guide to Lunker Catches” is the best and most organized source of this type of information. John Bales has a thorough working knowledge of the information in this book. He has studied and followed the Guidelines in this book for many years. He pays little attention to the hundreds of methods that are not based on scientific facts of fish behavior.

## **PERSISTENCE.**

Don’t give up! Fish do not move constantly nor consistently. The depth and speed needed to trigger a reflex strike changes with conditions. Don’t let the weather defeat you. Calvin Coolidge summed up the importance of persistence in

the following quote: “Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistent and determination alone are omnipotent.”

**CONFIDENCE.**

Belief in the knowledge you have acquired about fishing and its’ source is critical. Your past experience plus what you have acquired from others gives you the confidence to persist. The knowledge of Spoonplugging discovered by Buck Perry is rooted in facts that were found out and reconfirmed hundreds of times by the scientific method. The ultimate reason to rely on those facts lies in the huge catches of fish by many Spoonpluggers over a period of more than 50 years!

**SATISFACTION.**

If you don’t get satisfaction out of your fishing, you will not persist. It is not only the catching of fish, but the gaining of knowledge that confirms the value to you of what you are doing. Satisfaction can include family recreation, food for the table, skills developed, memories, pictures, and sharing your knowledge and experiences. Taking others out, especially children, and having them catch big fish is especially satisfying by bringing joy to others. Learn to do those things that give you the most satisfaction, and you will experience a lifetime of fun fishing!



45 inch Muskie, Lake St. Clair, September 2005