

FISHING REPORT: THE GRAND IS GREAT AGAIN!



Rick with 18 inch smallmouth from the Grand River

In past years, I have made some **decent catches** of fish from the **Grand River** (see chasesfishes.com---Outings/ Fishing Reports/ Species). **2015**, however, was a different story. I had fished there 5 times with **only a fish or 2 to show** for it. On **November 27, 2015** after recent rains, snow, and cold snap, I invited Rick Awtrey to join me again. The **weather was clear and calm** with **air temperature** in the **low 40s'**. Reports were that steelhead were in the upper Grand, so we **trolled crankbaits** a total of about **3 hours with no results**. We also chose to **cast a few spots** on previously mapped structures. **On one** of the spots where we anchored, we **began catching fish** and 2 other boats in the area saw that and began circling around us. Instead of getting mad, we just continued to remain and catch fish. We only saw one smallmouth caught by them. Terry O'Malley has reminded us frequently to **never leave an active school of fish**, and we **stayed there for 2 hours!** The results were more than decent. One of the nicest limits of **smallmouth bass** I have seen included **3-17 inch and 2-18 inch fish, 3 pike to 30 inches, and a 22 inch 4 pound walleye** that probably came from Lake Michigan. The only undersized fish caught was a 14 7/8 inch walleye. A 14 inch carp was hooked that had a lamprey on it that was longer than itself!

All fish were caught casting ½ ounce bladebaits with a “Visual Enhancement Device” on each hook. The speed used was a short hop of only a few inches, with very little feel of the fish taking. I began to realize just how much I like to cast with braid. At one point, my braid casting reel failed and I had to start using a monofilament setup. Right away I lost some fish because the line was not stiff enough to set the hook well. Only when I set very hard and quickly began reeling could I land some fish on the mono. Also critical to making the catch was to hand-sharpen the hooks before using. Even new lures often need touching up. This was a story about persistence and knowledge. Rick commented that he had watched me use blade baits many times before, but only today realized how effective they were. In reality, he was observing the use of patience and the fine-tuning of depth and speed control in lure presentation. The lack of wind may have helped also, as the calm water surface allowed for easier reading of eddy currents and more precise casting. Low river levels and a late fall may have been factors in poor fishing in the Grand River this year, but we need to remember Buck Perrys’ advice that how fish react to depth, speed, and structure is most important of all!

Chase Klinesteker, CSI



4 pound Walleye from the Grand River