

"BLADEING PERCH"



Limit of Lake Michigan perch

The **perch are back** in Lake Michigan! On Thursday, **July 14, 2011** starting at 9:30AM, I fished **Lake Michigan at Holland** and **caught some nice fish**. The **weather was beautiful**, with **light east winds, partly cloudy skies**, and a high temperature of **75 degrees**. Water **clarity** was around **10 feet** and **water temperature was cool, 48-52 degrees** because of the **east wind**. After much looking, **some fish** were **located** with the sounder **on an inside turn**, or slot of deepwater near shore. **A few fish were caught**, but the fish seemed inactive, and **other boats** in the area were constantly **moving around**. **By noon I only had 3 fish in the boat**, but was determined to stay and get a full meal of delicious perch. **Then the sky turned clear with full sun, and the fishing shut down completely for 2 hours!**

Around **2:00PM** the fishing started to pick up as more high **cirrus clouds** started to move in. I was fishing a **base breakline at 19 feet** that **tops around 14 feet**. There was a **current moving north parallel to the shoreline** and bubbles were coming up from the bottom that showed as streaks on the sounder. **I fish for perch with jump lures**, in this case **½ ounce blade baits**. This is somewhat different than most, but I feel there are **several advantages** to using blades. The **weight allows** the lure to **reach the bottom quickly**, and the **stiff graphite rod, baitcasting reel, and Fireline** allow good feel and quick removal of fish from the school. Spoonplugging concepts apply to all species of fish, including perch. **Schools of fish move along breaklines parallel to the shore**, and **casting out allows one to stay with the school longer than just waiting for them to come under the boat**. Also, forcing **fish to reflex strike** with the **speed of a jump lure** can sometimes be more effective than waiting for them to get hungry and take bait. Some question my use of a **2½ inch blade bait with #4 trebles on it**, which seems **somewhat large for perch**. It seems that mostly **larger, more aggressive fish will take this lure** and that **fewer small fish under 8 inches are caught**, a good thing. In fact, many of the

perch I caught had **all 3 points of the rear treble in their mouth**. I use a **small piece of cloth on each treble hook** to give **something for the fish to strike at**, and, as the guidelines state, jump the lure up sharply and let it fall on a tight line so the strike can be felt.

Around **4:00PM, the fish "stopped biting"**. If you have read Buck Perrys' book "Spoonplugging—Your Guide To Lunker Catches", you are aware that in the section referring to Lake Michigan, he states that **if the fishing slows on one breakline, you must check shallower and deeper breaklines to relocate the fish**. I checked shallower and found no fish, so I **checked out the next deeper breakline which was from 18-24 feet**. **A few fish were spotted at 24 feet** at the base of the breakline. I **dropped a marker** to pinpoint the breakline and **then anchored and began casting**. **Right away I began catching more fish**. They **had not "stopped biting"**, but had **just moved to a deeper breakline!** Another **boat that saw me catching fish** came by and I **invited him to join** in the fishing. I told him what lure was being used, and asked if he was familiar with Buck Perry or Spoonplugging. He didn't seem interested and **continued to use live bait, even though I was catching 3 or 4 fish to every one of his**. **By 6:00PM I had my limit of perch (35) that were from 8-12 inches**. What an **exciting day!** This was the first limit of perch from Lake Michigan for me since I was in high school (more than a few years ago)!

It was a **long day**, but **persistence paid off** to provide **one of my most memorable catches---and most delicious meals!**

Chase Klinesteker, Certified Spoonplugging Instructor