

LUNKER HUNTER SPOONPLUGGERS MEETING MARCH 4, 2010

“TOOLS OF FISHING”



A few fishing tools and aids

Don Stephens couldn't do the program so Chase filled in with his **Sport Show seminar** and Don will do the casting program next meeting. **“Tools of Fishing”** was the seminar title, which covered the **10 most important tools we use to catch fish: Boat, Motor, Rods, Reels, Lines, Markers, Net, Anchor, Lures, and Informational Tools** (e.g. depth sounder, contour maps, GPS, pencil and paper). It was mentioned that a **carpenter** picks the most **functional tools in his work** and tries to keep them **simple and manageable**. The **job** we do as **Spoonpluggers** is to **trigger fish to strike** our lures. **Knowledge about fish behavior is essential** in understanding how to do this, and Buck Perrys' book **“Spoonplugging”** is the top, and longest proven, **source for that knowledge**. Basics of fish behavior were gone over. Spoonplugging could be considered the **“Ultimate in Fishing”** because we **target the biggest fish, of all species, on all waters**. Just understanding that **larger fish can swim faster** helps us target them by **checking faster speeds**. **Depths** (where, not just in feet) will **vary because fish move**. **Speeds** to trigger a strike can vary **from dead bait to over 10 mph**, depending on the water temperature, season, weather, and fishes' activity level at the time. It all **boils down to controlling the depth and speed of our lures**, and all fishing tools should be looked at in that regard.

Only 2 ways exist to **present lures: casting and trolling**. We should **use both every day** we are on the water because some days only one or the other will produce. **Trolling is our teacher to learn structure** and cover lots of water. **Casting** is used **when we have pinpointed the fish** or want to fish an area more thoroughly. Skills using both presentations are needed, and **trolling is the more difficult**. **Lures** were the first tool category discussed. There are **4 lure types**: 1) **Free running bottom bumping (crankbaits)**, 2) **Jump lures**, 3) **Weedless**, and 4) **Topwater**. All lures on the market will fit into one or more of these types. **All lures will catch fish** (or they wouldn't be made). The **key is to control the depth and speed** of your lures to **trigger a reflex strike** from the fish. Because the needed **depth and speed are changing** often, you **need to check all depths and all speeds** with your tools to arrive at the proper combination (e.g. **strain the water**). Some common lures were displayed and limitations in depth and speed control with them were discussed. This was compared with the **7 sizes of Spoonplugs** giving **extremely accurate depth control from 2 to 25 feet**, along with **speeds of 1 ½ to 10mph without changing depth**. Spoonplugs (crankbaits) were the type recommended **to be used most often**, since one can obtain the fastest speeds both casting and trolling with them, and we can **learn more about the lake bottom**. **Jump lures** are used to **check the slower speeds by casting**. If **no results** are obtained in an area **after 8-10 casts** with jump lures, one should **return to trolling** to cover water, learn

structure, and locate fish. **Weedless and topwater baits should be available, but** have **limited** times when they are effective (e.g. what portion of the day do topwater lures usually work?).

Also discussed as **a factor in triggering reflex strikes** was use of the **unnatural in lures**. **Walking a Spoonplug on bottom** structure creates a **very erratic action**. This gives the appearance of a **weak or disoriented baitfish** and is quickly **pounced upon**. A **free swimming lure** running at a constant speed is much **less likely to trigger a reflex strike**. How often do you see **badly deformed or albino fish in Nature**? It is **because the unnatural is eliminated first**. **Chartruse** is an often **effective color** in lures, yet **occurs rarely in Nature**. Maybe we **don't always have to make our lures appear natural** to get strikes. It is the **depth and speed control** that **gets results**.

Other important tools were discussed also. **Markers** are key to helping us learn and visualize bottom structures, and they simplify lure presentation, mapping, and interpretation. **Boats** should be safe for the waters being fished, but smaller is better for accurate boat control while trolling. Smaller **Motors** (10-15 hp) are the best for accurate speed and direction control, but safety needs to be considered. Large fast motors usually result in "running and gunning" and structures are not worked thoroughly. **Trolling Rods** should be short and stiff to give the angler a feel of the bottom. If a trolling rod is too long and flexible, one may lose feel, knowledge, time, fish, and lures. Long trolling rods are more tiring also. **Casting Rods** should be 5 ½ to 6 feet long with heavy action to cast lures up to 1 or more ounces. A casting rod should be strong so you control the fish, not the other way around. **Trolling Reels** should be level wind, light saltwater type with a star drag and antireverse. The best control is when the handles turn as the freespool lets out line. Backlashes, lost lures, and lost fish could increase without that feature. **Casting Reels** should be of the open faced, level wind, baitcasting type for a smoother and better drag than a spinning reel. Also, spinning reels will twist the line as the drag lets out, weakening it. Learning to cast a baitcasting reel is not very difficult if one remembers to cast smoothly at the elbow. Snap casts with the wrist are reserved for spinning reels! Keeping a full spool of line helps you control the fish better, and reduces backlashes. The best **Trolling Line** is Bucks' Baits No-Bo, which is a metered monofilament with the stretch removed. I like the 17 pound test for most situations. It is stiff and gives excellent feel of bottom conditions when trolling with just a slight give to it. Some use braided lines for trolling, but it is less accurate in depth control, and can be almost too stiff, sometimes resulting in lost lures, broken rods, or hooks pulled out of fishes' mouths. **Casting Lines** recommended are 15-20 pound test monofilament with some color in them for visibility. It is better to use the stiffer, cheaper mono lines available for casting to give one a feel of the lure and bottom. Braided line can be used for casting also, but has some of the same problems as when used for trolling. However, its' feel is excellent and you can walk bottom from a slightly deeper anchoring position than with mono, so I use it at times also. **Anchors** are very important to hold the boat in place for fan casting or repeat casting to a school of fish (the ultimate goal of all Spoonpluggers). A 15 to 20 pound 3 fluke river anchor or Danforth wind anchor are good choices. 2 anchors are recommended with 50-100 feet of 5/8 inch rope on each. A big **Net** is essential to make sure we control and land the fish. Most big fish are lost at boatside. We spend too much time, effort, and money to hook the fish of a lifetime, and then to lose it because of none or too small a net! The **Depth Sounder** and other informational tools are important also. Mr Perry worked on his first sounder in the late 30's and developed the first flasher prototype after that. His experience in World War 2 working on submarine electronics allowed him to appreciate what a fine tool a depth sounder can be. Yet he constantly reminded us of how we can allow it to become a crutch, ending up running around the lake looking for fish and not being thorough in our depth and speed control.

Each tool that we decide to use should be **looked at** in terms of how well it will allow us **to control the depth and speed** of our presentation, and we should **constantly be checking all depths and all speeds on structure** until we arrive at the fish. It makes sense to go **back to basics!**

Chase Klinesteker