

“LOCAL LAKE STUDIES”

Comments about various West Michigan lakes at Lunker Hunter Spoonplugger meetings

GUN LAKE: Walleye are often found near the islands and smallmouth north of the main hole. It is a good perch lake, especially north of Hastings Point. There is an isolated hole off the State Park that could be productive at times. It was brought up that maybe we could have a day outing there sometime. It has a lot of boat traffic, so pick your time to go wisely. Much of the north and west portion of the lake is very shallow and considered a “lower unit red area”!

MURRY LAKE: Charlie Myers and Roger Bouwkamp spoke about fishing Murry Lake for muskies. They both have spent much time there in 2011, with most of the year not very productive. December, however was a different story. From November 26 to December 31, Charlie caught 9 muskies, more than the rest of the year combined. Charlie drew structures involved on a dry-erase board. He said there was a short window around dusk each day when most were caught, relating to the time when baitfish became active and moved shallower. He ran the 100 and 700 Spoonplugs at 3 to 3.5 mph to get reflex strikes, with water temps at 36-38 degrees. Results seemed the same in cloudy or clear weather. He said don't be afraid to run a 100 lure over short deep weeds.

HAMLIN LAKE: The study lake map was of Hamlin Lake, a large (5,350 acre) reservoir north of Ludington, MI. In the early 80s' it had good water color, contained hybrid muskies, and was a very productive fishery. Since then, likely due to zebra mussels, it has become very clear and more difficult to fish, although North Hamlin has some water color and a good thermocline. South Hamlin can get very rough and have no thermocline in 80 feet of water. Our club has had a few outings there and we have experienced just how rough it can get!! There are many resorts around the lake and it might still be an option for an outing sometime.

HARDY, CROTON RESERVOIRS: The Hardy and Croton Dam maps were projected on the wall and discussed. They contain deep, clear water and can be tough fishing, partly because they have more varied structure than natural lakes. In the larger reservoirs, migratory fish (walleye, pike, etc.) will be found in different areas seasonally. The main channel and side feeder stream cuts can be key in helping to locate fish in them.

CLAM LAKE: Clam Lake is 3 ½ miles long, connecting Lake Belaire and Torch Lake, northeast of Traverse City, Michigan. Water color is 12-14 foot visibility and weeds grow to 16 feet, which makes for tough fishing. That is better than Torch Lake, which is much clearer, In addition, the lake bottom was very soft, and lures could not be walked on the bottom. The bottom was even soft and mucky in much of the shallows, and scattered clams could be seen in 1-2 foot depths, indicating the lake is aptly named. Clam Lakes' structure consists mostly of weedlines forming bars, and the old river channel which meanders from side to side and is mostly silted in. The deepest water in most areas is 22 to 24 feet, with a few spots 26-27 feet. There are 3

smaller holes in the east portion of the lake beyond the narrows, but the deepest water there was only 16 -17 feet, so this section was not fished as much. The weedline ended at 14 to 16 feet and had a “step” in it after 8 feet where shorter weeds were present. See Clam Lake Fishing Report.

LAKE MACATAWA: The study lake was Lake Macatawa near Holland. It is a darkwater lake connected to Lake Michigan that has a clean bottom for trolling and learning to Spoonplug. Weeds go to only 4 or 5 feet. The deep channel access allows large migratory fish to move in and out freely. It has large populations of baitfish and many species of gamefish, including smallmouth bass, walleye, pike, and musky. Large drum and catfish are in good numbers and can offer much excitement when the gamefish are not active. It has many good structure types, including wide sweeping bars, river channels, feeder cuts, and manmade rip rap. It was mentioned that 6-12 feet were the most productive depths to fish this lake---making it considerably easier to fish than many of the clearwater lakes in the area. Results can be excellent but spotty.