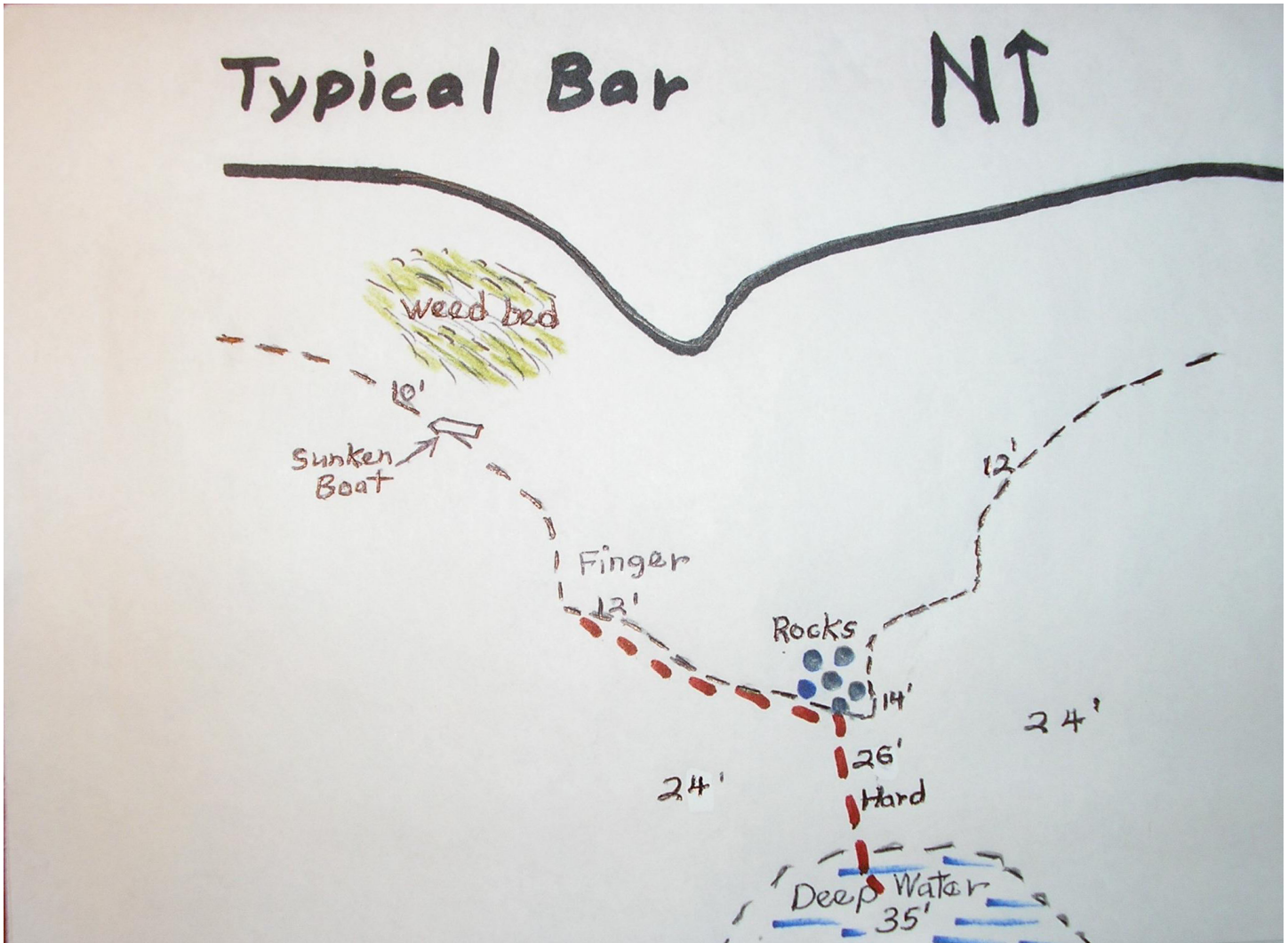


## “POINT OF CONTACT”



The contact point is at 26 feet off the rock pile at the tip of the bar (base of sharper break)

As Spoonpluggers, we hear much about the “**contact point**” as being an **important part of each structure** that we should locate and present lures on. This is where the **school of fish first contacts structure** after becoming active and moves **out of their deepwater home**. It is the deepest and **most important part of a structure** because fish will be there more often than any other part of it. This is due to the fact that the fish will **not move shallower unless weather and water conditions permit**. Mr Perrys’ statement that “fishing is usually bad—and then gets worse” is not an idle statement. We should **check the shallows**, but not expect the fish to be there often, and **be ready to go deeper**, as deep as the structure goes, **down to** and including the **contact point**.

**Structure**, where the bottom is different from the surrounding area, **is the key** to finding the contact point. Many small or mid-sized structures **often have just one contact point**, but **large, complex, or wide sweeping bars can have several**. That is why it is recommended to **take soundings and thoroughly map each feature of a structure**. If there is plenty of deep water related to the structure and the structure is good sized, it is likely to have more than one contact point. It still makes sense to **map all the contact points**. The challenge in this case would be to **determine the best contact point** of several: the **longest, narrowest, sharpest, deepest break to the deepest water in the area**. This would be the one that likely holds the **largest fish and greatest number of fish**. As Frank Hamill has reminded us in the past about the Serengeti big cats, “**The biggest and baddest get the best lie**”.

**Locating** the exact position of the **contact point** is necessary to properly present lures there, both trolling and casting. This is done **by following mapping procedures**. First, **soundings are made** going off the structure to see **where it**

**breaks and if it leads all the way** from the shallows to the deep water. **Preferably, the first major breakline** should be **15-17 feet or deeper**. Then that breakline of the structure is **followed by the boat** without a lure in the water **to get** a picture of the **outline form** of the structure. **Points, fingers, and sharper breaks are noted** and **markers or waypoints are placed** on those features. **Soundings** are taken **off each feature** to determine just **how they relate to the deepest water** in the area and **if any deeper breaklines are present**. If there are, they should be followed around also, down to and including the base breakline or last element of the structure. **The contact point will be found somewhere on the base breakline, related to the feature closest to the deepest water in the area.**

**To fish this structure**, proper sized **Spoonplugs** should be **trolled in the shallows, on the breaklines, and on the features, which should be straight-line (pattern) trolled** to allow for fish that might be suspended off them at the breakline depth. **Then casting** the features **from an anchored position with jump lures** completes a thorough checking of the structure for active fish. It is natural for Spoonplugs to **want to take shortcuts** with these procedures in order to save time, but if we do, we may not trigger strikes from fish on the structure or there **likely will not be enough information gathered to accurately pinpoint the contact point**. Once a structure has been mapped and the information recorded, **lure presentation** on it **in the future** is **greatly simplified and more efficient**.

Chase Klinesteker CSI