

# TRIGGERING STRIKES BY CONTROLLING LURES

WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO  
GET FISH TO BITE



# QUESTIONS COVERED

- 1) Magic Lures?
- 2) Why fish strike, the behavior of fish
- 3) What Controls do we have?
- 4) Why not smell?
- 5) Can we control everything?
- 6) The 2 most important controls
- 7) How to target the largest fish

# WHAT WE ARE AFTER

## BIG FISH, ALL SPECIES

Big Largemouth Bass, Reeds Lake



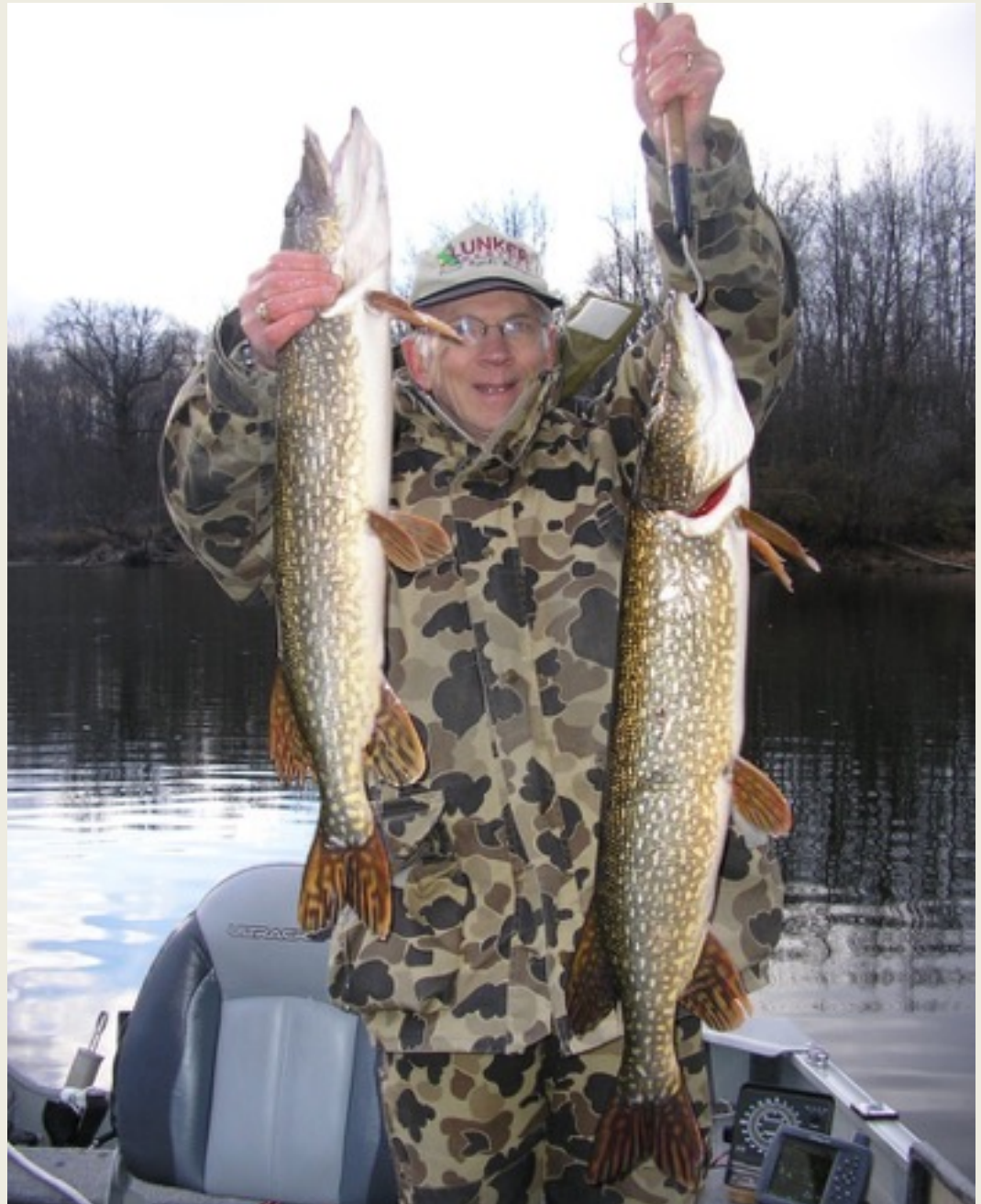
**Big Smallmouth,  
Lake Saint  
Claire**



# Big Musky, Detroit River



# Big Pike, Grand River



# Big Walleye, Lake Macatawa



**Big Steelhead,  
Grand River**





# Big Perch, Lake Michigan



# Big “Other” fish, Mona Lake

**NEEDED: AN ORGANIZED  
APPROACH TO LURE PRESENTATION**



# ARE THERE MAGIC LURES?

- **Magic: something we don't understand**
- **Will a special wiggle, color, or scent draw fish from long distances?**
- **Knowledge brings us back to reality, there is no shortcut to success**
- **Fish are somewhat nearsighted but must see our lure before they strike**
- **We must go to the fish to trigger strikes**

**Magic lure? Or was it just proper control that put the lure in front of the fish at the right speed to trigger a reflex strike.**

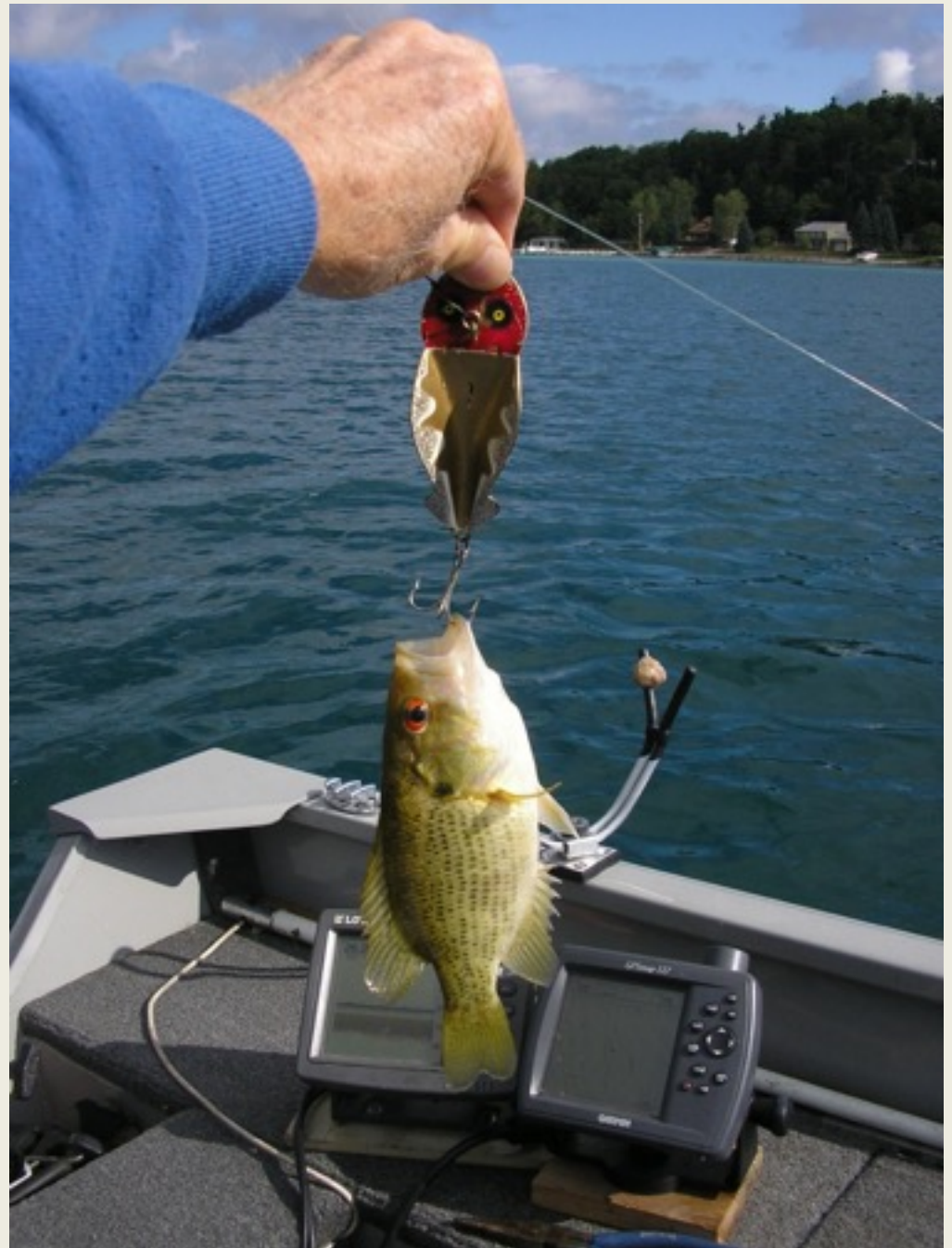


Spring Lake, 9 lb. walleye, 6 mph

# WHY FISH STRIKE A LURE

- **Gamefish are predatory animals**
- **Escaping prey**
- **Hunger? All hungry at once?**
- **Weather changes affect all animal activity (fish, birds, deer, squirrels, etc.)**
- **Instinct---Cat and string (food?)**
- **Moon phase? Local weather overrides**
- **Does it look like food?**

**Does this Rock Bass think he can eat it or did he just reflex strike?**



# KNOWLEDGE, THE BEHAVIOR OF FISH

- Buck Perry, the “Father of Structure Fishing” studied the science of fish behavior in 1930’s and 1940’s. He found:
- Fish are not smart, have a pea-sized brain, and mostly function on instinct
- They follow pathways on the lake bottom (structure)
- They react to weather changes like all animals
- They do not move constantly nor consistently
- Older (larger) fish school tighter, stay deeper, and are more reluctant to come shallow
- The deepest water in the area is their home where they are usually inactive (often around 35 feet)

# BEHAVIOR OF FISH, CONTINUED

- Fish usually get active once or twice a day and may move shallower. Activity time usually lasts for minutes, not hours
- When fish get active in a lake, they all move
- Smaller fish are more adaptable and move shallower to avoid getting eaten
- Light is the most unstable factor for fish. Their eyes are designed for low light (no pupils or eyelids)
- Light is most stable in deep water. At 35 feet, most light is gone (home of the fish)



# COLD FRONTS AFFECT FISH!



# WHAT LURE CONTROLS DO WE HAVE?

- **1) DEPTH**-Put lure in front of fish, fish move
- **2) SPEED**-from Pt. A to Pt. B, 0-10+mph
- **3) COLOR**-Many colors + combinations
- **4) SIZE**-Many sizes
- **5) ACTION**-Many actions and “wiggles”
- 1,000’s of choices. What about smell?

# WHY NOT SMELL?



- Predatory gamefish are sight feeders
- Only catfish feed mostly by smell (small eyes, scavenger)
- Aquarium fish will taste floating fish waste
- Pollution in our waters may dull senses
- If you have confidence in a scent, USE IT!



# **CHECK ALL 5 FACTORS IN 1 SPOT? (depth, speed, color, size, & action)**

- Impossible—1,000s of variations to check
- Would take hours, if not days + many lures
- All lures will catch fish
- We need to narrow down to the most important controls that trigger strikes
- Let's look at color first

- PICK A COLOR
- ANY COLOR?



# HOW IMPORTANT IS COLOR?

- Sound sensitivity can get fish close
- Colors disappear as one goes deeper
- “Natural” colors blend in, but we want our lures to stand out so fish can see to reflex strike
- Freaks are eliminated first (e.g. albinos)
- If you have confidence in a color, use it!

# IS CHARTRUSE COMMON IN NATURE? WHY DOES IT WORK?





# WHAT IS BASIC TO COLOR?

- **Visibility, fish must see the lure before striking**
- **Water color, background color, bottom color, and available light all affect lure visibility**
- **Light intensity is important. That changes often**
- **So how do we pick the right color for a situation?**

# GUIDELINES FOR COLOR

- ON BRIGHT DAYS, CLEAR WATER, USE BRIGHT COLORS--WHITE, SILVER, CHARTRUSE, ETC.
- ON DARK DAYS, DARK WATER, USE DARK COLORS --ORANGE, BLACK, BROWN, ETC.
- IN BETWEEN, USE NEUTRAL COLORS--BRASS, YELLOW, GOLD, ETC.
- Buck Perry used polished brass, but manufactured many colors because fishermen asked for them

**CONCLUSION: USE SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR COLOR**

# WHAT ABOUT SIZE?



Some fish will strike a  
lure  
Larger than themselves

**Big fish will strike little lures and  
little fish will strike big lures**



**Musky caught on #400 size Spoonplug**



# FACTS ABOUT SIZE

- Fish are “stacked” naturally with small fish in the shallows and large fish deeper
- Small lures are more easily worked shallow
- Large lures work deeper with better control
- Large lures are more visible in low light (deep)
- Large lures make more noise (locate in low light)
- Conclusion: Lure size reflects Depth Control

# WHAT ABOUT LURE ACTIONS?

- Many lures are sold by their “enticing” action
- Numerous actions. How does one evaluate?
- Sound reflects action, especially in dark water
- Fish locate prey partly by sound (lateral line)
- Lure sounds increase in frequency and volume with increased lure speeds
- Conclusion: Lure action reflects Speed Control

# FLATFISH: SLOW SPEED, MUCH SOUND



# SO WHAT CONTROLS ARE LEFT?

- **DEPTH** and **SPEED**
- **DEPTH** IS WHERE THE FISH ARE, NOT JUST A #
- FISH MIGRATE AND ARE FOUND AT MANY DEPTHS
- NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DEPTH
- WE CANNOT CATCH A FISH UNLESS WE PUT A LURE IN FRONT OF HIM
- CONCLUSION: ALWAYS CHECK ALL DEPTHS



# BOAT CONTROL INVOLVES DEPTH AND SPEED



Important?



**Musky, 36 feet, walking bottom, current, Detroit River, precise depth control**

# MORE ON DEPTH

- **DEPTH SOUNDERS ARE AN AID IN DETERMINING DEPTH BUT THEY CANNOT PUT A LURE IN FRONT OF THE FISH**
- **FISH CAN BE CLOSE TO BOTTOM AND NOT SEEN ON SOUNDER**
- **WE FISH STRUCTURE, WHERE THE BOTTOM IS DIFFERENT. MAPPING HELPS PINPOINT AREAS THAT FISH WILL USE**

# WHAT ABOUT SPEED?

- SPEED IS VELOCITY, Pt. A To Pt. B
- HOW FAST A LURE MOVES MAY TRIGGER THE REFLEX STRIKE; AN ESCAPING PREY
- FISH ARE COLD-BLOODED
- THE TRIGGER SPEED NEEDED VARIABLES WITH THE WEATHER AND WATER TEMPERATURE
- SPEED NEEDED CAN BE 0 TO 10+ mph
- CONCLUSION: ALWAYS CHECK ALL SPEEDS

# TROLLING SPEED CAN BE 8-10mph

Faster speed,  
better  
hooking



# SUMMARY OF CONTROLS

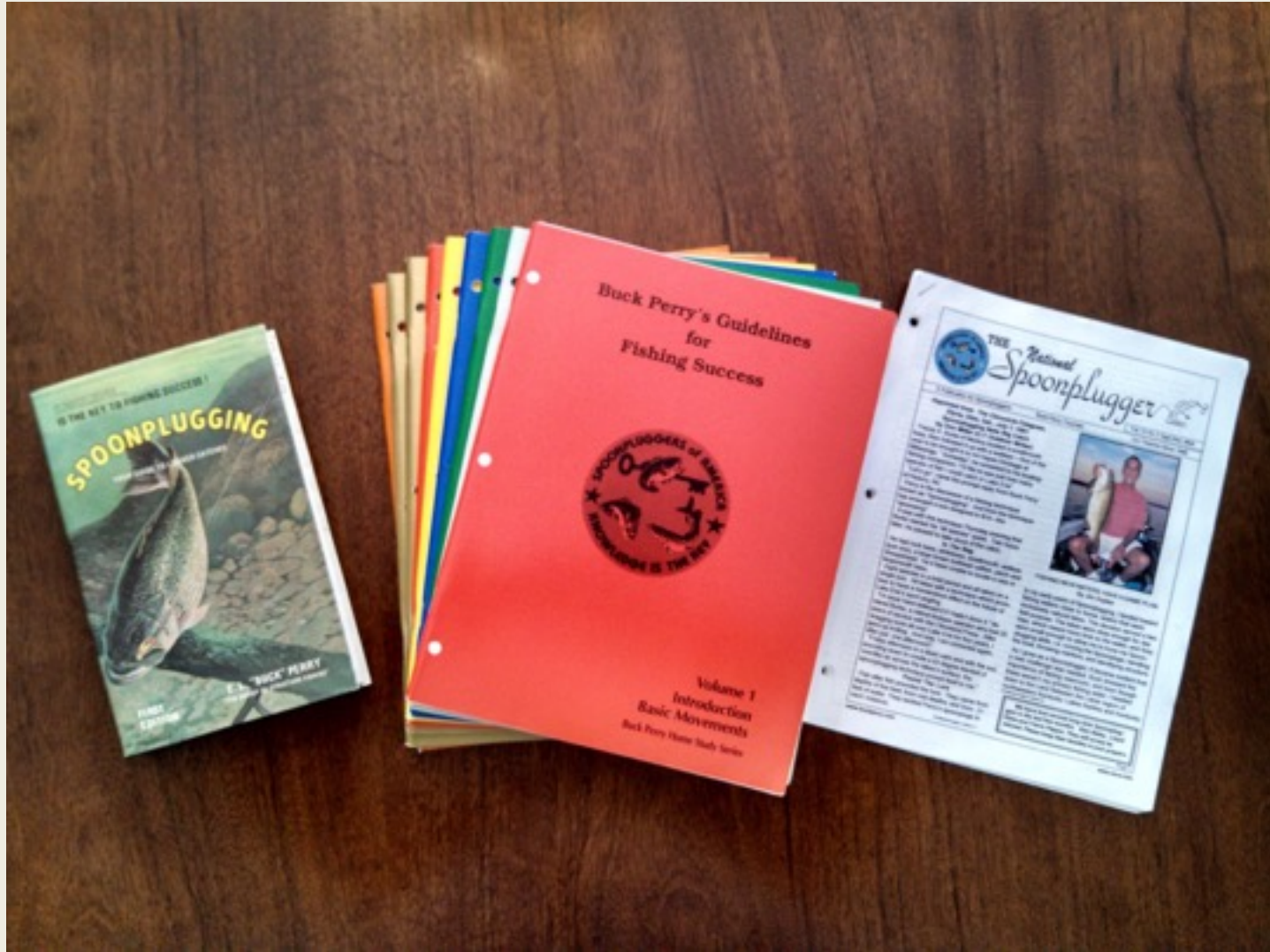
- Don't need to check all sizes; covered by depth
- Don't need to check all actions; covered by speed
- Don't need to check all colors; we have simple guidelines
- In presenting lures, always check all depths and all speeds on structure to trigger strikes from fish. Each day is different, don't fish memories

# BUCK PERRY QUOTE:

- **“ALL FISHING SUCCESSES AND ALL FISHING FAILURES MUST BE ANSWERED IN TERMS OF DEPTH AND SPEED CONTROL”**



# KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY



“GREEN BOOK”

9 VOLUME “GUIDELINES”

NATIONAL



# HOW DO WE CONTROL DEPTH & SPEED? PICK “TOOLS” TO DO THE JOB

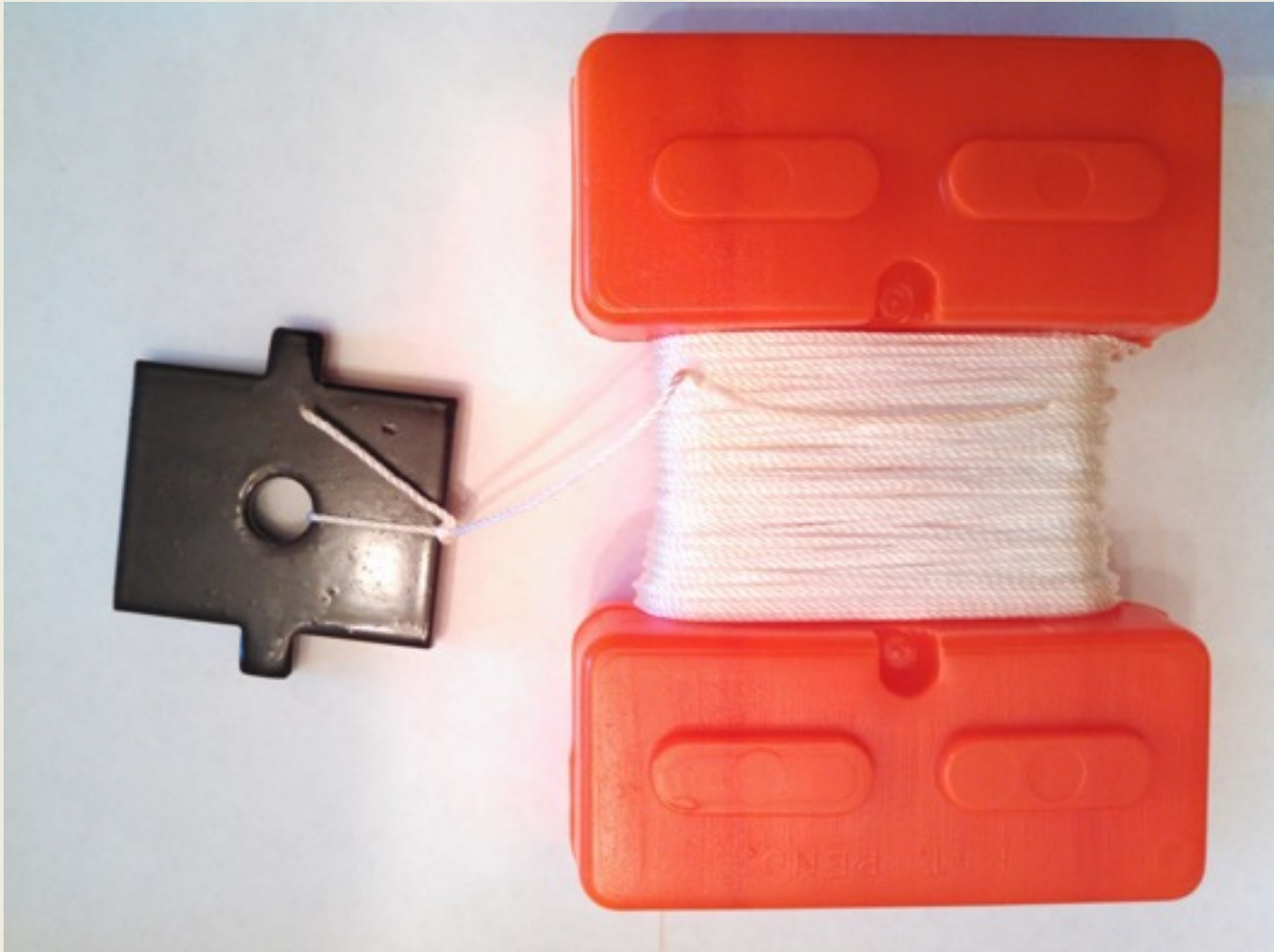


Anchor, baitcasting and trolling rods, reels, and line, depth sounder—

# BOAT AND MOTOR



# MARKERS---



# AND LURES, 4 TYPES

- 1) CRANKBAITS, FREE-RUNNING, BOTTOM-BUMPING--Faster speeds
- 2) JUMP BAITS--Jigs, spoons, slower speeds
- 3) TOPWATER--use on surface
- 4) WEEDLESS--use in weeds
- Trolling crankbaits is our teacher
- Casting jump lures checks slower speeds
- Select all lures with depth and speed in mind

# TOOLS FOR ACCURATE DEPTH AND SPEED CONTROL, CAST AND TROLL

Control  
depth and  
speed at the  
same time  
1 ½ -10 mph



2-4 ft  
ft 20-25 ft

4-6 ft

6-9 ft

9-12 ft

12-15 ft

15-2

# HOW DO WE TARGET BIG FISH?



Hess Lake bass limit, caught from a school and quickly released

# SPOONPLUGGING TARGETS BIG FISH BY-

- Checking faster speeds. Larger fish are more aggressive and can swim faster
- Trolling and mapping the entire lake. We find hidden structures not known by others
- Controlled fishing deep (difficult).  
Deep water is the home of adult fish
- Routinely “walking” the bottom
- CHECKING ALL DEPTHS AND SPEEDS,  
CASTING AND TROLLING, ON STRUCTURE  
(Spoonplugging in a nutshell)

# **SPOONPLUGGING SOURCES**

- **BUCKPERRY.COM---**lures, Spoonplugging equipment, study material
- **NSOA.INFO---**newsletter, videos, articles
- **SPOONPLUGGER.NET---**online forum
- **JOHNNYB-LURES.COM---**JB lures, bladebaits
- **STRUCTUREFISHING.COM---**educational TV
- **CHASESFISHES.COM--**pictures, history, articles
- **Google “Spoonplugging”**



**MAY KNOWLEDGE  
GIVE YOU  
FISHING  
SUCCESS!**

Chase F Klinesteker, CSI

