

# GRAND RIVER FISHING REPORT, QUILLBACK QUESTION



Fished the Grand River on Friday, June 22, 2018 and caught a fish I don't believe I had ever caught before, so I took a picture to identify it later.

## THE REPORT

Began fishing around 9 AM with air temperatures in the low 60's and cloudy skies. The water level was down about 1 ½ feet from a previous trip over a week ago, so the river was very fishable. The current was at .8 to 1.5 mph, the water temperature at 73 degrees, and water color about 2 ½ feet. I began by trolling 2 known structures, starting in the shallows (#500 Spoonplug) and working down to 9 feet (#250 Spoonplug) to determine the depth the fish were in. The speeds checked were 1 ½ to 4 mph. No fish were caught on either of these structures, even though some casting was also done with the usual jumpbaits. I remembered a story by Buck Perry about an early spring outing where the successful speed was extremely slow using light 1/16 ounce jigs. In desperation, several drifts were made casting them toward the bank. Still no fish or hits. At about 11:30, it was decided to go upriver a ways and fish a half-mile section of an outside bend in the river. At the 4-6 foot depth, I began to catch smallmouth bass on #400 and # 250 Spoonplugs. 5 smallmouth bass to 15 inches were boated and several more were lost in a short period of time, trolling both upstream and downstream. The best fight of all came from a 5 pound fish of a sucker species that I did not recognize. By 1:30 PM, the action stopped. The interesting part was that all the hits and fish caught were at or over 4 mph!

Whenever the trolling speed was slowed down, the fish would not hit. It is a lesson in speed control that will not be forgotten.

### **QUILLBACK CARPSUCKER**

The fish in question was a Quillback Carpsucker. It is fairly uncommon in Michigan and at risk for extinction here. They prefer clear water and gravel or sand bottom, and feed on insects, mollusks, and plants, making them rarely caught by normal fishing methods (although he surely smacked a #400 Spoonplug going 4 mph!). They live up to 11 years and the average weight is 1-4 pounds. A 5 pound fish is good sized, but the Michigan State record for hook and line is 8.52 pounds and a 9.42 pound fish was taken by bow and arrow from Hardy Dam. This fish is quite attractive with large, reflective silvery scales and a long flowing spike on the dorsal fin. The Quillback is a schooling fish that runs upriver in the spring to spawn, laying 60,000 or more eggs.

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