

## GRAND RIVER REPORT:

### “VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE”



27 pound Flathead Catfish, Grand River, 5 species caught

On Friday, **November 28, 2008** I decided at the last minute to go **fishing** in the **Grand River**. The **weather** was **reasonable** (if you define reasonable as **35 degrees and 20 mph winds!**), and I went because **ice is starting to form on the bays**, and I knew that I **might not get out much more this year**. It is **mostly a steelhead fishery** this time of year, but I **enjoy catching any species, especially** if they are **large**. Trolling slow crankbaits is the primary way we catch steelhead, so 2/3 of the time was spent at that. However, I would not be following Spoonplugging guidelines if some casting were not done. The **plan** was to **begin near the launch** and **troll every hole upstream for about 3 miles**. Established **casting positions** on mapped structures were **anchored on and fancast after a “run” was trolled**. Disciplining oneself to do this allows you a much **greater chance to determine** the best structures and the proper **depth and speed needed to trigger fish to strike**. An **8 pound 26 inch steelhead** was caught **trolling** about halfway along the planned route. The strike was solid and the fight vigorous, with a lot of twisting and turning. A long rod, heavy equipment, and steady pressure finally wore down the fish. The area was re-trolled without further strikes. The **nicest surprise** came from **2 of the casting positions**, where several fish were caught casting jump lures (blade baits) at a very slow

speed. First came an **18 ½ inch smallmouth** bass. With the water temperature around 33 degrees, the fight was slower, but powerful. Next came a **30 inch northern** pike of about 7 pounds. **At another** casting position, **two carp in the 10 pound range** were hooked. **Finally, 5 flathead catfish** were caught with the 2 largest going **12 and 27 pounds**, respectively. Talk about powerful! The 27 pounder (36 inches) was the **largest flathead I had ever caught**, and it took a **long time to bring to net**. **I became toasty warm**, despite the wind and cold! It was a thoroughly enjoyable day, and 2 of the 10 fish caught were kept for the table (steelhead and pike). **5 species of fish had been caught**, and I **tried to catch a walleye** to score the “**Ultimate Species Whammy**” of the Grand River, but **ran out of time!! Variety can be the spice of fishing as well as of life.**

People not familiar with Spoonplugging don't have a clue **how a catch like this can happen**. Yet to one **with Spoonplugging knowledge, this catch is not all that unusual**. Our guidelines for **procedures** and presentation of lures **target large fish of ALL species on rivers as well as lakes and reservoirs**. Some of the **Spoonplugging Guidelines used** on this trip included:

- 1) **FISH ALL DAY**---9:00AM to 4:30PM was most of the available daylight that day. Fish activity occurred in the afternoon. 3 other boats fishing the river that day reported no success but left early.
- 2) **CHECK ALL DEPTHS**---1 to about 12 feet was all that needed to be done.
- 3) **CHECK ALL SPEEDS**---Mostly slow this time of year.
- 4) **BOTH CAST AND TROLL**---These 2 different presentations allow for a wider range of depth and speed control.
- 5) **FISH GOOD STRUCTURE**---Previous mapping and interpretation of the structures in this river section allowed me to spend my time where I had the best chance to catch fish.
- 6) **USE EQUIPMENT HEAVY ENOUGH TO CONTROL THE FISH**---A baitcasting reel, stiff rod, and 17 pound line was necessary to assure these fish would be landed.
- 7) **USE A BIG ENOUGH NET**---Think 27 pound catfish!
- 8) **TAKE PICTURES OF YOUR CATCH**---Fishing alone does not give you an excuse. The camera can be placed on a boat seat and the timer used, as in the above picture.
- 9) **KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY**---Knowledge from studying Buck Perrys' book “Spoonplugging” and experience on the water using that knowledge is the key to this kind of fishing success.

I could go on and give many more Spoonplugging Guidelines that were unconsciously used on this trip. To get the **total story**, read/study Buck Perrys' book “**Spoonplugging, Your Guide to Lunker Catches**”, available online at: [buckperry.com](http://buckperry.com), [nsoa.info](http://nsoa.info), or you can contact a Certified Spoonplugging Instructor for more information.

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