

Catch  
The Striper  
Fever!

# T.S.B.A.



The  
Tennessee  
Striped Bass  
Association Newsletter

January  
2003

Happy New Year



## Letter from the "Prez"

Hello striper gals and guys.

Well I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We had 17 people at the Christmas party at Mountain Lake Marina on the 14th. We had a great meal for everyone. Stanley went shopping for all the food and the cook did such a wonderful job preparing the steaks. ( I was the cook). We told a few fish stories and I had a really good time. Thank you to everyone that came.

The fishing was pretty tough for the Winter Classic on Norris at Hickory Star on the 7th and 8th. The weather was a lot better this year from last year if you remember it pored down rain the whole weekend last year. The fishing was allot different this year also. Last year the fish were being caught on planner boards, and this year we were fishing 50 and 60 feet deep for them. Seems that the high water levels on the lakes are changing the patterns that were normally use. I hope that if you are out there fishing you are changing your methods to see what is working. Gook luck I hope you do well.

For those that are interested I filmed a striper show with Oneil Williams on Norris lake on the 11th and 12th of December.

It went pretty good we caught 7 fish for the camera which one was a 30 pounder and got lots of footage of the birds diving and fish breaking. The show is called the Oneil Outside show and should air on Fox Sports South and the Outdoor channel sometime late February or early March. I will let you know as soon as I know the exact time and date.

Now is the time to catch and release so go get them there striper.

Your striper friend and Prez. Allan

## 2003 TSBA Calendar

Attend TSBA sponsored tournaments & join us at the meetings.

**January 27th:** Monthly meeting. MOUNTAIN LAKE LODGE at Mountain Lake Marina on Norris Lake Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm

**February Tournament:** Date To Be Determined

"Catch & Release" Tournament at Bull Run Steam Plant. 1PM

**February 24th:** Monthly meeting. MOUNTAIN LAKE LODGE at Mountain Lake Marina on Norris Lake. Dinner 6pm. Meeting 7pm

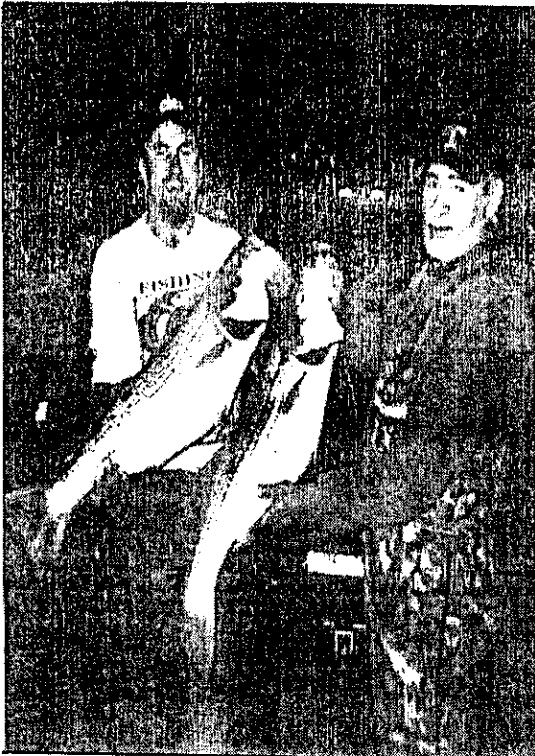
**March 31st:** Monthly meeting. MOUNTAIN LAKE LODGE at Mountain Lake Marina on Norris Lake. Dinner 6pm. Meeting 7pm

**April 6th:** TSBA Annual "StriperBowl" Tournament on Cherokee

**April 28th:** Monthly Meeting. MOUNTAIN LAKE LODGE at Mountain Lake Lodge on Norris Lake Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm.

**May 26th:** Monthly meeting. MOUNTAIN LAKE LODGE at Mountain Lake Marina on Norris Lake. Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm

*\*Other Dates Will be added*



**Bill  
Brown  
19 Lbs**

**and**

**Bob  
Mcintosh  
16 Lbs**

# February Expectations

Wintertime patterns are expected in all reservoirs as long as the temperature remains well below 50 degrees. Slow catch rates will be on the mid lake & downstream sections. Winter kill off of small bait fish may start to develop as soon as the water temperature drops.

The strippers and gulls may occasionally work the surface together. Normally the best fishing is near the large concentration of small bait fish in the main channels 20 to 40 feet deep. During the next few months is when the records have been and will be broken. The steam plants are the premium places to fish until the water warms up in the spring.

Skipjack have been the choice bait for most of the past records and trophies, however the most abundant forage fish will catch the most fish even if they are smaller bait. Planer boards, balloons, sinkers, bottom fishing & artificials all work at the steam plants with the high concentrations of bait fish and all types of game fish are there.

## Fishing Hot Spots



### Watts Bar Lake

**Current Rating:** Great

**Notes:** This is the place to be. Kingston Steam Plant has started to attract bait fish to the warm water discharges. Yellowtail are everywhere.

### Cherokee Lake

**Current Rating:** Good

**Location:** Most fish are near Hwy 25 bridge. Fish are hitting topwater baits and downlines depending on their mood. Experiment with both techniques.

**Bait:** Live shad and Topwater baits.

### Norris Lake

**Current Rating:** Fair

**Location:** The upper half of the Lake just off the main channel seems to have the best concentration of fish.

**Bait:** Shad

**Notes:** Top Water action has continued.

### Melton Hill Lake

**Current Rating:** Fair but improving fast.

**Notes:** The Steam plant has started to attract baitfish and the strippers have followed. Plan to make a cold weather trip to fish the discharge.

### *New Password:*

**The current password is:**

**Username: "tsba"**

**Password: "club"**

The TSBA web site offers up to date fishin' reports to all TSBA members. Visit the web at:

**[www.TNStripedBass.com](http://www.TNStripedBass.com)**

## **Are Striped Bass Reproducing in Norris Reservoir?**

No! Norris is checked with seines each year before any fingerlings are stocked to see if any reproduction has occurred. There has never been any evidence that striped bass have reproduced in Norris.

## **How Often are Striped Bass Stocked in Norris and How Many are Stocked?**

TWRA's intended stocking rate is five fingerlings (2 to 4 inch) per acre per year in designated reservoirs. This expands to approximately 171,000 for Norris. However, prior to the 1976 construction of the Eagle Bend Hatchery, production space was limited. Stocking from 1966 through 1974 averaged 1.4 fingerlings per acre. From 1975 through 1995, stocking averaged 4.2 fingerlings per acre. There has been a total of 3,254,278 fingerlings stocked in 30 years. In addition, 1.3 million surplus fry were stocked during that period. These were one-quarter inch long sac fry that probably ended up as bluegill food.

## **If TWRA Stocks 171,000 Fingerlings per Year and Fishermen are catching Only 20,000 Harvestable Fish (Over 15 inches) per year, Aren't There a Lot of Striped Bass Accumulating in Norris?**

No! When fingerling stripers are stocked, they are subject to the same perils that any other fingerling would encounter if stocked in a wild environment such as a reservoir. Many are eaten by other predators and some succumb to the rigors of transporting and handling. Annual natural mortality reduces that age class of fingerlings each year by a significant percentage. A California study shows that less than half the one-year old fish survive to three years of age. Approximately 10 percent live to be harvested by fisherman.

## **Is It True That a Striped Bass Eats its Weight In Fish Every Five Days?**

Opponents of TWRA's striper stocking program have circulated literature claiming that striped bass eat their weight in fish or other prey every five days and that an eight pound striper would eat over 400 pounds of shad or other fish per year. This literature stated that the information was provided by biologists in South Carolina, Alabama, and Texas. TWRA contacted all three states and found that none of them had made any such claims.

# nt of Norris Lake

Aquaculturists who rear striped bass and hybrids for the commercial market feed a commercial dry diet. They feed at one to one and a half percent body weight per day. If they feed at a higher rate, the fish put on fat instead of growth. Fish feeding on other fish would consume a higher percentage of their body weight because of the water content. However if an eight pound striped bass could eat 400 pounds of shad in one year it would probably gain at least 40 pounds in one year.

## **Was the Fishing Public Aware That Stripers and Hybrids Were being Stocked in Norris Back When the Program First Began?**

The striped bass program was one of the most publicized programs of the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission. In the 1960's, area newspapers frequently carried articles and photos of fishermen and their catches. Commission personnel presented programs to clubs and groups informing people about the stocking program and what could be expected.

There was no known opposition to the striped bass at that time. The only pressure on fisheries personnel from the public was to produce more striper fishing.

## **Were Studies Done after Striped Bass Were Stocked to Determine What They Were Eating?**

Studies were conducted in Tennessee as well as other states to determine food habits of striped bass. Two studies were done on Norris. The first one was a Master of Science thesis done by a University of Tennessee graduate student J.M. Richardson in 1979-80. The second was done by TWRA beginning in March, 1988, and continuing through June, 1991. Two studies were done on Cherokee and one on Percy Priest Lake.

To our knowledge, there is not one documented case where striped bass have negatively impacted sport fish populations in Southern reservoirs. Striped bass do eat a game fish occasionally but the occurrence is so infrequent that it does not influence the overall population.

TWRA has copies of several food habit studies done in other states. Of particular interest is a study done by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Hybrid Striped bass were stocked into a lake without shad to utilize overpopulation of bluegill as prey. However, even in a lake where there were no shad, the hybrids did not eat enough bluegill to impact the population.

Continued on page 7...

## **TWRA Management of Norris Lake Continued from page 6..... Don't All Big Fish Eat Little Fish?**

Most predatory fish eat smaller fish. There are some species of fish that grow large but do not feed on small fish. Paddlefish, for example, grow to more than a hundred pounds in weight but feed on zooplankton. They rarely eat other fish. Other species that feed very little on smaller fish are suckers, carpsuckers, carp, and buffalo.

The largest predator in Norris is the flathead catfish which grows to 85 pounds in that reservoir. Its primary food is other fish, and their mouths are large enough for them to consume fairly large prey. The flathead reproduces in Norris but is unharvested because few people know how to catch them. The gar is another fairly large predator in Norris but is unharvested. The Gar's diet is predominately small fish.

### **Did TWRA Stock Alewives in Norris?**

No! TWRA stocked alewives in Dale Hollow and Watauga reservoirs because both lakes lacked a small shad-type forage fish. Threadfin shad stockings had been unsuccessful because of frequent winter kills. It has since been learned that the alewife has a negative impact on walleye reproduction. For that reason alone, TWRA would not have stocked alewives in Norris. Also, prior to the winter die-off of threadfin shad in 1993-1994, there was an abundance of shad in Norris so another forage species was not needed.

### **Why Is TWRA Stocking a Non-Native Fish In State Waters?**

There were 65 species of "native" fishes in the Clinch and Powell rivers before Norris was impounded. Now, 43 species are found regularly.

Continued on page 8.

# Please

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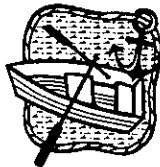
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Lake\***

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TWRA Management of Norris Lake Continued from page 7.....

This includes white crappie, white bass, threadfin shad, striped bass, and

alewives that were not in the rivers when the dam was constructed.

Flooding rivers and creating reservoirs change habitat so dramatically that it is suitable for some species that were not there before. Likewise, some native species might not survive in the new environment at all.

Striped bass are not native to Tennessee but they are native to freshwater rivers and estuaries on the East Coast. Striped bass were stocked to control the growing population of gizzard shad that were too large for most of the other game fish to eat, and to provide a game species that would spend most of its time in open waters and take some of the fishing pressure off the other game species.

Copies of the TWRA Management of Norris Lake Document can be acquired through the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

## TIME TO RENEW?

*Remember to renew your TSBA Membership! Your expiration date is printed on your mailing label. If you have renewed always allow time for mailing. You should see the date change on your next months label if you have renewed. We may not have*

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# TSBA Merchandise



Hats are gray w/ a Striper on the front & the letters TSBA in green. Adult T-shirts are gray or tan depending on availability in sizes w/ a Striper and Tennessee Striped Bass Association embroidered in green. Kids shirts are gray. Sweatshirts are hunter green with TSBA in gray on front & Catch the Fever on the back with a Striper & fishing rod.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Hats**      Number of **Winter** T.S.B.A. Hats \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

                Number of **Summer** T.S.B.A. Hats \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Kids Shirts**

Number of Shirts (*kids size medium 10-12*) \_\_\_\_\_ X \$8.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Number of Shirts (*adult size large*) \_\_\_\_\_ X \$12.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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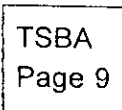
Number of *adult size large* \_\_\_\_\_ X \$22.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**\$5.00 to ship 1 to 2 items or \$8.00 3 or more items**      Shipping \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Order Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_**



*Make checks payable to the "TSBA". Do not send cash! Mail to:*

**TSBA Merchandise**

**4612 Woodbridge Lane Knoxville Tennessee 37921**

# "A Four Star Christmas Eve To Remember"

By Allan Franklin

It was cold and rainy day that 24th of December. I decided to go fishing. I called my very good bestus friend Bill Ballou. (You will see why he is a good friend later in the story) I talked his wife into letting him go fishing & Bill met me below Melton Hill Dam. We caught our bait, got to our favorite spot & started fishing. By then, it was 12:30. By 2:30 we caught 6 stripers. I had to promise Bill's wife he would be home between 3:00 and 3:30 so I took him back to the camp. I decided to leave Melton Hill & go on down to Kingston Steam Plant to finish off the day. To my surprise, there was no one at all fishing the steam plant, this was wonderful, I had it all to myself. It was 3:30 by the time I launched & got started. I had just gotten 3 lines out when I got my first hit & the rod folded over. As I reached for the rod my second rod folded over & then the third. I knew then that I made the right decision to go to the steam plant. As it turned out, I only managed to land two of the three. I ended up with 10 stripers & 1 hybrid by 5:30. I decided to call it a day & loaded up for home.

I got on the interstate & started out (For those of you who don't know, the steam plant is exit 350 off of I-40.) I was around mile marker 363 when I heard something that sounded like my passenger side door wasn't closed all the way. I listened but it would come & go so I just kept going. At mile marker 365 a man in a car (probably a fellow fisherman) started flashing his lights at me. I pulled over & got out to see what he wanted. He also pulled over & was standing next to the boat staring at my trailer wheel, minus a tire. He said he had been smelling burning rubber for some time but did not know where it was coming from until he saw the wheel on my trailer. I thanked him for letting me know & assured him that I had a jack & lug wrench to take care of the tire change myself. I have had several Dodge trucks, Dakota's & Ram 1500's but now I owned a Ram 2500. The lug wrench in my other trucks always fit the lugs on my trailer so I did not think to check it when I bought my new truck. Well, you guessed it, it didn't fit, too big. No problem, I have AAA. The voice on the other end of the line calmly says "Mr. Franklin, you have Triple A Plus, it does not cover boat trailers" My day has now gone from fantastic to #&\*&^%.

I remembered there was a truckstop at the next exit which was only about 4 miles away. My rim was already destroyed so I decided to turn on the flashers & limp up the shoulder. My luck wasn't about to change...no one had a lug wrench that would fit. (Remember my mentioning my BESTUS friend Bill). I called him & asked what he was doing. He said he was eating but after I told him my story he said he would be right there. He was there in a flash. We fixed the tire and I was finally on my way home.

If you have not checked to see if the lug wrench from your car or truck will fit

**YOUR 2002 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS & STAFF**

**President:**

Allan Franklin 865-694-8888

Allan@TNStripedBass.com

**Treasurer:**

Marion Smith 865-494-8602

**Vice President:**

Toney Stevens 865-426-8509

Toney@TNStripedBass.com

**Secretary:**

Amy Stevens 865-426-8509

**TSBA 2002 DIRECTORS**

**Newsletter/Web site:** Toney Stevens E-Mail: Newsletter@TNStripedBass.com

**Newsletter Distribution:** Pat Smith 865-494-8602 E-Mail: Pasmith6@aol.com

**Conservation:** Tim Scoggin 865-524-0093

**Tournaments:** David Osborne & Lisa Osborne 540-395-3153

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**Newsletter:** Robert Leach, Janine Johnson, Marion Smith, Wayne Anders

**Web Site:** Andrew Bradbury

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**T.S.B.A. 2002 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

As a member: \*You'll receive a monthly newsletter.

- \* You'll help support Striped Bass Fisheries & Wildlife Agencies.
- \* You'll be informed of new regulations & information that affect Striper fishing.
- \* You'll develop a network of "Striper friends".
- \* You'll learn new methods to improve your Striped Bass fishing effectiveness.
- \* You'll be able to call officers for fishing reports.
- \* You'll be able to attend monthly meetings with informative programs.
- \* You'll have access to all areas of the TSBA web page.

Is this a renewal  or a New Membership

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The TSBA is a non-profit organization, that supports TWRA & its Striped Bass, & Cherokee Bass programs. We come together to provide a unified voice for the Striped Bass & the Cherokee Bass programs in the state of Tennessee. We educate the public & share our knowledge with fellow Striped Bass anglers.

The Tennessee Striped Bass Association  
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**May all members, family and friends of  
The Tennessee Striped Bass Association  
Have a Safe and Bountiful 2003  
"FISH ON"**