

**Catch
The Striper
Fever!**

TSBA



*The
Tennessee
Striped Bass
Association Newsletter*

February
2003



Our President Allan Franklin

Letter from the "Prez"

Hello striper gals and guys.

Man it has really been cold this month and the fishing has been pretty cold too. There has been some good days on the water at steam plants though. I was disappointed in the number of members that showed up at the last meeting. I know it was cold, which means you did not have many other things to do except sit home. This is the time of year that there is not much else to do so you should make it a point to come and enjoy some good food and fellowship with fellow TSBA members.

ATTENTION: To everyone that fishes on Melton Hill Lake. Starting March 1st there is a new size limit on stripers on Melton Hill. It is a slot limit of 32 to 42 inch with only one over 42 or two under 32 inches per day. If you are not aware of what a slot limit is I will try to explain. The new law means that you can't keep any stripers between 32 and 42 inches. If they are in that size range you must turn them back. The limit is still two fish per day but only one can be bigger than 42 inches. You can keep one under 32 and one over 42 or two under 32 inches only. This is the same law that is in effect on Cordell Hull Lake in middle Tennessee where the present state record striper is from.

It should not be to long before the weather breaks and the water will start warming up a little. Then you all know what will be coming then, Yep top water action. I can't hardly wait, but in the mean time I am still going to have lots of fun at the steam plants. If you want to have fun catching 5 to 10 pounders that is the place to be. I would bring Shiners with you or stop by Cherokee and get your bait on the way because bait is really hard to come by at the steam plant. Good luck till next time.

Your striper friend and Prez. Allan

10 Tips To Better Live Bait Fishing By Steve Taylor

- 1. When fishing with live shad or shiners use a hook that is proportioned according to the size of your bait. If you use a hook that is too big for the bait it won't swim naturally in the water and will attract fewer strikes.**
- 2. Never handle live shad or shiners unless you have wet hands. If you do not wet your hands before handling your bait you will remove the scales and slime coat, and damage your bait.**
- 3. When throwing a cast net, never overcrowd your net with bait. If you load your net full you will damage the fish by knocking off scales and their protective slime coat and greatly decrease their life expectancy.**
- 4. Never hook your bait through the eyes. You want your bait to see the game fish coming after it. This excites your bait, causing the gamefish to be more aggressive, thus resulting in more bites.**
- 5. When fishing with live shad or shiners mix up the size of your baits. Big baits catch big fish. Small baits catch more fish but usually won't draw the strikes of the bigger fish. It's important to offer several sizes of bait to attract ALL sizes of fish.**
- 6. Only put the freshest and healthiest baits on your hook. If you pull bait out of your bait tank that looks weak or unhealthy, pass it up. You want to use the friskiest of baits on your hook to attract more strikes.**
- 7. Choose a round or oval bait tank. Shad will congregate in square corners causing a lack of oxygen to flow through their gills resulting in stress, loss of scales, and eventually death. Adjust the water flow so that the bait will school in a stationary position to prevent damage.**
- 8. The biggest problem people have while throwing a cast net is that it doesn't fully open on a consistent basis. Most of the time, this is because the net is thrown either too hard or too far. Using the twisting motion of your upper torso to lob the net will result in more consistent openings of the cast net and prove to be less tiring.**
- 9. Before adding bait to your tank, add non-iodized salt to the water to help harden scales and rejuvenate the baits slime coat. For shad, I recommend 1/2 cup for every ten gallons of water. For shiners, 1/4 cup for every twenty gallons of water. Water softener salt is excellent.**
- 10. During the heat of the summer you can use ice to keep your bait tank water cool. I recommend freezing two-liter plastic soda bottles filled with water. This keeps any unknown impurities such as chlorine and heavy metals out of the tank.**

Gizzard Shad By Bob Leach

The gizzard shad is unquestionably the most important bait fish for striper fisherman in east Tennessee. Almost always, the striper fisherman will have a gizzard shad hooked through its upper lip or they will be using some kind of artificial lure intended to mimic a shad. If you ask veteran striper angler, Ezell Cox, he will quickly tell you that there are only two types of fish: Rockfish and baitfish. Ninety-Nine percent of the time, he will have lively gizzard shad in his bait tank. The reason for their importance is the fact that they are the preferred food of the striper. This has been well studied and documented. Therefore, I thought it would be interesting to research and document some of the more relevant facts concerning the gizzard shad.

The gizzard shad is native to east Tennessee and they have evolved and adapted to some of our local waters extremely well. In fact, if they are left unchecked, they can become the dominant species in the lake and actually can become a problem due to their sheer numbers. One article I read indicated that "It is not uncommon for adult gizzard shad (8" and larger) to comprise 60 -80% of the total fish in the lake." Obviously, this would be a disaster for all the species in the lake including the shad itself. The reason is that the gizzard shad has adapted extremely well to high-fertility, slow-moving rivers and reservoirs. Basically, it is a better survivor than other species. After they spawn in the spring and summer, their food is microscopic animals called zooplankton and protozoa. They filter huge quantities of highly fertile water through their closely set gill rakers. They quickly supplement their diet with algae and insect larvae.

Gizzard Shad Continued....

This omnivorous feeding behavior means that the gizzard shad has an easier time obtaining food than other species. Their primary feeding technique is to swim in large schools filtering whatever there is in the water that is edible.

When you combine their superior feeding technique with the fact that they are prolific spawners, (a single female can produce over 300,000 eggs), it is easy to see why they can dominate certain types of waters. Actually when their numbers get too high, it is not a healthy situation for the shad or the other species of fish in the lake. Many species of fish (other than stripers) depend upon a consistent supply of shad for their survival. It is best when the shad population is maintained at a fairly-consistent level.

Shad are extremely sensitive to water quality and temperature changes. Huge die-offs can occur if the water gets too cold for an extended period of time, especially if they have overpopulated the lake. This results in wide swings in the shad population and for all the species of fish in the lake which depend upon the shad.

One of the primary reasons that shad take over a lake is the large numbers of them quickly grow to a size that most predatory game fish will not eat them. Introducing striped bass and hybrids into these bodies of water where shad can dominate, has had a dramatic effect on the fishery as a whole. First of all, a whole new sport has been created and the numbers of shad appear to be controlled to a more healthy level. Introducing the correct numbers of stripers into the lake has been a huge benefit to all the species in the lake. This has been a win-win situation for fish and fisherman.

Striper Sushi

Fishing "Cut bait" (chunks or filets of large bait fish) is a technique used by some of the nation's best trophy striper hunters. It's especially deadly in the winter, when the biggest stripers exert themselves as little as possible to feed.

Cut bait is fished on the bottom, usually on a primary structure such as a long point, gravel bar, or submerged hump. It can be fished either from an anchored boat or from the shore. At Norris Lake, Tennessee, winter bank fisherman often build a campfire to keep warm, relax in lawn chairs and have a weenie roast while waiting for a striper to grab their cut bait.

In slack water, cut bait is best fished on an oversized Carolina rig. In current, a three-way rig with a heavy pyramid sinker is recommended. Starting with a large gizzard shad or herring, lop off the head and either slice the fish into vertical chunks or filet it. Thread the cut portion or portions on a stout live bait hook, cast it out and wait. Some of the largest stripers ever caught proved to be "suckers for sushi".

Please

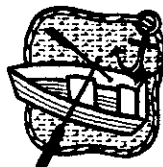
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2003 TSBA Calendar

Attend TSBA sponsored tournaments & join us at the meetings.

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 5th: TSBA Annual *StriperBowl* Tailgate Party.

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:

Sun Protection Year Round

Winter may seem like an odd time to worry about sunburns, but just because the air is colder doesn't mean you can't damage your skin from overexposure to sunlight. The Academy of Dermatology recommends following the same safety tips in the winter months as in the summer. Here's a list of it's advice:

1. Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15.
2. You should apply the sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before you go outside to give the sunscreen a chance to absorb.
3. Reapply sunscreen every two hours when outside in the elements, even if the sky is cloudy.
4. For each application, you should use approximately one ounce of sunscreen (about a shot-glass size amount).
5. Wear protective clothing constructed out of tightly woven fabric.
6. Wear a wide brimmed hat.
7. Protect your eyes from sunlight and UV rays by wearing sunglasses designed to block them. Up to 85% of the sun's damaging rays are reflected off surfaces like water or snow.

March Expectations

Late winter time patterns will be changing to pre-spawn as the water temperature in the shallow areas start to warm & stay above 50 degrees. Migration from the lower parts of the lakes into the shallow water of incoming rivers and major feeder creeks will develop as the higher concentrations of bait fish look for shade filtering in the sun warmed shallow flats and horde fishing for darters. Mosquito will be caught in the top 25 feet of water and some as shallow as a foot deep. It is time for the biggest and heaviest fish of the year. Use the largest bait of the year and don't forget to run your plane along the bank that the sun has warmed the most.

Fishing Hot



Spots

Watts Bar & Melton Hill Steamplants

Current Rating: Great at times!

Notes: Both steamplants have attracted baitfish and the Stripers have followed. The action has been good one day and off the next.

Heavy rains will stain the water and the high winds will turn the fish off. Plan to make a cold water trip to the discharges. Just remember to avoid the days after the heavy rains.

Cherokee Lake

Current Rating: Fair

Location: Fish are hitting both top water baits & downlines. The lake has been stained due to the rains. Find the clearest water you can mid-lake.

Norris Lake

Current Rating: Fair

Location: Hickory Star area & upstream seem to hold the best concentrations of fish.

Notes: Some Top water action has continued but the fishing has slowed.

New Password:

**The current password
is:**

Username: "tsba"

Password: "club"

The TSBA web site offers up to date fishin' reports to all TSBA

Catch And Release Guide For Stripers

- * Know the fishing regulations and be prepared to release fish.
- * If you are planning a catch and release trip for stripers, do so in early spring, late fall, or winter when water is less than 70 degrees.
- * Use strong enough tackle and land fish quickly to minimize stress.
- * Use barbless hooks or bend down the barbs on regular hooks to release fish quickly.
- * Use artificial lures instead of live bait to reduce deep hooking.
- * Replace treble hooks with large, single barbless hooks to reduce injury and handling.
- * If legal, keep fish that are bleeding heavily as their chances of survival are pretty poor.

Handling And Releasing Stripers

- * Keep the amount of handling to a minimum and keep fish in the water if at all possible
- * Use landing nets only when necessary and these nets should be made of knotless nylon or rubber.
- * Do not allow the fish to thrash around. If you must handle it use wet gloves or a wet rag. Stripers can be calmed down by covering their eyes or turning them on their back.
- * A fish that does not swim away can be resuscitated by swimming it while trolling to allow water to flow through its gills.

Removing The Hook

- * Carefully, but quickly, remove hooks using a dehooker, needlenose pliers, or forceps.
- * Whenever possible remove hooks in the throat or gut with a dehooker.
- * Cut the line if you cannot carefully or quickly remove hooks.

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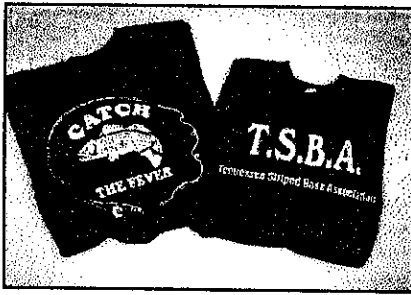
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Hats, T-shirts, pictured Right.

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TSBA STAFF

Newsletter: Thomas Knable, Shawn McNew, Toney & Amy Stevens

Web Site: Andrew Bradbury

Tournament: Ryan Barnes, Shawn McNew

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

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- * 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.

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Norris Tennessee 37828



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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We Are....
April 6, 2003