

**Catch
The
Striper
Fever!**

T.S.B.A.



**Tennessee
Striped Bass
Association,
Inc.
Newsletter**

**February
2006**

Cherokee Tournament

***March 11, 2006
2 PM to 6:30 PM***

Oak Grove Launch

(More Info Inside)

President's Letter

Hi Everyone,

As we head into the New Year, I would like to encourage everyone to participate in as many club outings as possible. It's important to build friendships and keep the club growing and going in the right direction. I also hope that those who live close enough can attend the monthly meetings this year. We are having different speakers each month, and if it is anything like last year, you don't want to miss out. Check the website calendar for the scheduled speakers for each meeting. Also, it is very important to communicate. This not only makes our club stronger it makes you feel like you are a part of a community of friends, not just a member of an organization. Feel free to use the Fishing Reports forum on the website; it is a great place to seek or offer information or to just have a good time.

Last month Warren Turner was to be our guest speaker, but he had some unexpected business to come up and had to reschedule. We have scheduled Warren to come back again this month, and I am looking forward to the February meeting. Warren will be sharing with us some of the changes and the direction of the NSBA. I hope that you can attend.

Also, I would like to personally congratulate Ezell Cox for the "Striper Fisherman of the Year" award that was presented to him by Striped Bass Unlimited of Kingsport - and to thank him and all of you who have done so much over the years to contribute to our fisheries. It says a lot about our fisheries and the management of them when people come here from other states to fish the Tennessee lakes.

I hope that in 2006, you get to land that trophy fish of your dreams.

John Seiber

2006 TSBA Tournament Trail

First of all, I would personally like to thank the TSBA for the opportunity to direct the 2006 tournaments. The six tournaments are meant to bring together all of the club members for some fellowship and friendly competition. One minor change in this year's tournaments is the tournament prizes. In addition to prize money, each separate tournament except for the Striper Bowl will have an engraved plaque which will be given out at the December 2006 meeting. Entry fee will be \$11.00. Ten Dollars of the fee will be returned 100% with 50% for first place, 35% for second place, and 15% for third place. The remaining Dollar will go towards the first place plaque. The entry fee for the April 30th tournament, The Striper Bowl, will be \$15.00. This amount will go to fund the Annual Kids' Day on June 11. Big fish pots are optional and encouraged. Two fish (striper or hybrid) will be weighed per event at all tournaments except for the July 8 - Fort Loudoun / Watts Bar tournament. Details will be given at a later date on the rules for that particular tournament.

The tournament calendar consists of the following dates:

February 11 – Kingston
March 11 – Cherokee
April 30 – Striper Bowl – Cherokee
May 27 – Cherokee
June 10 – Cherokee
July 8 – Fort Loudoun / Watts Bar
November 11 – Cherokee

Kingston Tournament February 11, 2006

We will launch from the Kingston City Park at 1 pm. We encourage all members that are able to have an ample supply of bait so that everyone will be able to be on a level playing field. There are no limits to locations as long as you stay on Watts Bar Reservoir. Bank fishing is permitted. Be aware of the no fishing zone adjacent to the Kingston Steam Plant. Live releases of fish are encouraged; if at all possible, we will designate a weigh boat, and multiple calibrated digital scales in several locations. If at all possible, try and get a picture and length of any fish you catch. The minimum length of stripers and hybrids must be 15 inches. Weigh in will be at 5 pm, at the Kingston City Park. Any unwanted fish will be graciously taken care of. If you have any questions you can get in touch with me at BDav38@aol.com or 865-300-0392. The club invites all members, fishing or not, their guests, and anybody else that wants to come to the weigh in. Dress warmly in layers, bring a camera and a smile and I hope to see everyone out for some good fishing.

Billy Davis

Cherokee Tournament March 11, 2006

The second tournament of the year will be held on Lake Cherokee on March 11, 2006. The launch location is the Oak Grove Launch off Lakeshore Dr. (Hwy 375). If possible, please bring a little extra bait for anybody with bad luck such as myself. The tournament will begin at 2 pm and weigh in will be at 6:30. The entry fee is \$11.00. Ten Dollars of the fee will be returned 100% with 50% for first place, 35% for second place, and 15% for third place. The remaining Dollar will go towards the first place plaque. Two fish (striper or hybrid) hopefully will be weighed in this event. The minimum length of stripers and hybrids must be 15 inches. Any unwanted fish will be graciously taken care of. If you have any questions, you can get in touch with me at BDav38@aol.com or 865-300-0392. The club invites all members, fishing or not, their guests, and anybody else that wants to come to the weigh in. Dress warmly in layers, bring a camera, or your dog, and I hope to see everyone out for some good fishing.

Billy Davis

Fishing Hot Spots



Cherokee Lake

The downstream end of the lake will have good fishing from Point 19 to the dam. Look for surface breaks and feeding gulls. Large schools at times can be found in very shallow water. Live bait is easy to catch in most of the warm coves. The Fort Patrick Henry steam plant will be good all month.

Norris Lake

The Hickory Star area and upstream will be good. The sunny side of the shallow banks will catch some top water fish in the afternoon. Spring Dock near Point 11 and upstream on the Powell River side will be good. Look for the warm water that attracts bait fish. Pull a planer board close to the bank.

Watts Bar Lake/Melton Hill Lake

The steam plants at Kingston and Melton Hill will have the most predictable catches. The contrast in water temperature will dictate how good the fishing is.

Fishing Regulations

New fishing licenses are required to fish starting March 1. It is each fisherman's responsibility to know the rules and stay legal. Changes are normal in the management of our fishing each year, and those changes become effective on March 1. Each river or lake may have exceptions you need to be aware of before exposing yourself to a fine. Go on line to Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency at www.tnwildlife.org or pick up a 2006 Fishing Regulations book at sporting stores or TWRA offices.

March Expectations

New fishing licenses are required to fish in March. March is a transition month for the prespawn stripers. Early month, the stripers roam the deep open water in large schools feeding on small bait. The winter pattern in the early month cold water of about 45 degrees F. may change to upper 50 degrees F. by month end in the shallow sun-warmed longer days. Migration into the shallow incoming rivers and major feeder creeks will develop around the large concentrations of bait fish. The gulls are still worth watching; also look for herons feeding on the sun-warmed shallow flats. Much larger baits start to work well pulled behind planer boards along the bank. Most fish will be caught in the top 20 feet, and the surface action can be good. The steam plants will continue to attract stripers.

On Norris Lake, the creel and size limits change from 1 fish with a 36- inch minimum size limit to 2 fish at 15-inch size limit starting April 1.

The TSBA web site offers up-to-date fishin' reports to all TSBA members. Visit the web at: **www.TNStripedBass.com**

The current password is:

Username: _____ Password: _____

Barometric Pressure

I was pleased to read the short article on barometric pressure's effect on fish and their willingness to bite. In my 19 years of daily runs on Norris, I have taken the time to record, in my daily log, exactly what appeared in the article.

There is a myth among anglers that fish will readily bite before the arrival of a front. Thunderstorms are a different matter; what I'm talking about is the arrival of a front where the barometric pressure drops considerably. With almost no exception, I have recorded time and again that the day immediately before the pressure drop sees few fish caught. On such days, fish are likely to suspend with little movement or hang out very close to structure. Some will actually sit on the bottom, or "lean" on structure, perhaps to assist in their disturbed balance. But, like many things, the rule has its quirks. The main quirk comes in the difference in species, and how different species react to the barometric drop. On Norris, the most notable exception I have noticed is in walleye. Walleye seem to be least affected by barometric pressure drops when you're talking about a drastic change in the fishing pattern and their willingness to bite a lure. Maybe it is because of their physiological shape, and their tendency to sit near the bottom much of the time. But, even in the walleye's lesser tendency to react to drastic barometric change comes a contradiction. I met an angler on the upper Clinch River who, when fishing for walleye, carries a barometer in the boat. He swears that on a "good fishing day" when the barometer is fairly steady, the walleye's willingness to bite comes with minor fluctuations in the barometer! In trolling and noting the barometric variances through the day, he says the walleye will bite when the barometer drops slightly, say a hundredth of a millibar. So, he trolls along, looking at the barometer. When the needle drops slightly, he expects a hit, and gets it. When the needle swings slightly upward, he says the fish are not likely to bite. The changes he is referring to are barely perceptible on a needle-type barometer - a needle's width of variation, he says.

Stripers and centrarchids with similar body shape and air bladder size (relative to body mass) seem to react about the

same to the barometer, I believe. In nature, there are few absolutes when it comes to animal behavior; about the time you think you've got them figured out, they'll make a liar of you. Even so, I think it's safe to say that a severe front associated with very low barometric pressure, and which takes days to move through, has the most detrimental effect on fishing. Fish can take days longer to recover than if the front whips through in a day.

The days to dread are those under a high barometer. Bluebird days, some call them. However, bluebird days which stick around long enough give fish time to recover, and fine catches can be had even when the barometer is high.

Barometric pressure which remains steady for an extended time gives fish time to adjust and to resume their feeding. It's the change in the pressure that throws them a curve, as the newsletter so accurately says.

If I'm going to work when the barometric pressure is steady at 29.90 (give or take a few hundredths), I know I am likely to see a number of fish caught. My observations indicate that days with a steady barometric reading of 29.90 to 29.99 are the most productive ones.

One of the best things an angler can do, especially an angler with little time to fish, is to purchase a barometer. If the pressure is rising and the sky is clear, go fishing anyway. But don't expect to catch much. Still, a slow day on the lake beats mowing through yellow jackets, or raking leaves.

Paul Shaw

Question of the Month

How many fish did you lose last year because the fishing line or the knot broke?

197 fish total for 30 members surveyed

WHAT STRIPERS EAT

Successfully fishing for stripers with live bait is arguably the most difficult method. There are some good reasons to try and master the live bait techniques, although I realize there are many other ways to catch stripers that have rewarding days. Plugs, jigs, spoons, flies, and cut bait are adequate at times. Trolling with downriggers or outriggers, casting or jigging, and even fly rod users have that special day at the right time of year. But in my biased opinion there is nothing like the challenge of catching, keeping, and presenting the right bait to target the size fish you are after.

Stripers are very size and species selective at different times of the year; and when their habitat is different or changes because of current or temperature, so do their feeding habits. Stripers have a tendency to feed on the most numerous and easiest forage bait for them to target. Certain times of the year you could be just drowning your bait if you have the wrong size or type of live bait. In winter when the water is at its coldest is one of those times. All of the smallest baitfish move out of the cold, shallow coves into the main channel where they become very lethargic in huge, tight schools in open water. The stripers are more comfortable in cooler water than the bait but are cold-blooded and their metabolism slows also so they eat less, and even the largest stripers may be on a diet of the smallest baitfish until the water temperature warms.

Instinct may cause an impulse to feed on items that resemble forage from the striper's saltwater ancestors. Shad, skipjack, alewife, and crayfish are some of the common fresh water items found in striper's stomachs. Some of the saltwater striper's common forage that resembles these is herring, pilchard, menhaden, and shrimp. Stripers are opportunistic feeders and will feed on trout or other river fish where they become accustomed to them in the same habitat or in trouble struggling like maybe on a hook. I find that trout in most reservoirs is not the great bait it is in the rivers.

The anti-striper people would give you some bad information about the striper's eating habits. For the most part they are no different than any game fish. Big fish eat little fish. Although all game fish may occasionally feed on another game fish that is not what you want to use to be the most successful. Gizzard, alewife, and threadfin shad are more numerous in most waterways than other forage species; and they are also the most abundant in the stomach of all adult game fish including the striper.

The threadfin is smaller and more abundant except after winter kills, and then the alewife quickly fills the empty niche in early spring. The alewife is similar in shape and size to the threadfin and small gizzard shad (2 to 4 inches common). The gizzard shad and skipjack quickly become too large to be baitfish except for the largest stripers.

Everything about fishing with live bait is a challenge even if you take the easy way out and purchase it. You still have to get them to the stripers, not just alive, but lively and frantic, to trigger hits. Shiners resemble striper's natural bait and are easy to use in cold months. Other purchased bait seldom performs as well as catch-it-and-use-it-now baits. Skipjack have caught at least four of Tennessee's state record stripers. They do require some extra effort to keep and transport to use later. They are usually found in large, clear, flowing rivers and below dams. They travel in schools, feed primarily on fish, insects, and plankton, and are easy to catch with small flies, spinners, and Sabiki rigs.

Find the largest size legal cast net that you can open fully that fits your personal ability. Mesh size is also important to target the size of bait you want. The large mesh may hang the bait and damage it while the small mesh sinks much slower as it parachutes as it sinks. Most of the bait falls into the range of 4 to 15 inches used for striper fishing. The 3/8 inch is the smallest and 5/8 inch mesh net is the largest that is recommended for these sizes of bait. Most striper fishermen know where the best bait holes are and will give you good information on the best places to get them for the time of year. Traveling for an hour to get the best bait is better than throwing a net for an hour and maybe getting what you want and maybe not.

(continued next page)

(continued from previous page)

A good bait tank with aeration, filtration, and insulation is needed. Experience and knowledge of how many bait per gallon according to size and time of year is critical. Bait saver, salt, antifoam, tranquilizer, and other chemicals can help keep bait lively but used incorrectly can make them sick or dead.

When you finally get the wild, frantic, fresh bait to the stripers and present it correctly, they will often hit even though they are not actively feeding. One of the major drawbacks that a new live bait person may develop is not changing bait often enough because it was so hard and time consuming to get. I often joke with some of my friends, "If it is still wiggling don't throw it away." We then put fresh bait on and cause everyone else to wonder why we are catching fish and no one else is.

There is so much information that I am leaving out, but this could turn into a book if I tried to put it all on paper. I don't have time to write a book because it's time to go catch bait. Always remember, it is easier to feed them than to fool them. USE LIVE BAIT.

Ezell Cox



Ezell Cox
Receives
"2005
Striper
Fisherman
of the
Year"
Award

(see next page)

Ezell Cox was presented "Striper Fisherman of the Year" award by Steve Carriger, Vice President of Striped Bass Unlimited. The award is customarily presented to the person who has done the most to help promote striper fishing and striper fishermen in Upper East Tennessee.

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**Jan. 10,
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YOUR 2006 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND STAFF

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Minutes of the January Meeting

Ezell Cox was presented with the 2005 Fisherman of the Year award by Steve Carriger of Striped Bass Unlimited. See Pages 12 and 13 for picture and more info. Steve talked about Boone Reservoir stocking, catching, and bait.

Meeting speakers are needed for August, October, and November. Allan Franklin will ask Ken Cutsinger, Bill Ballou will ask Jim Negus, and Chet Moore will take November.

John Seiber will be heading up the Cherokee Campout for June 10, the day before Kids' Fishing Day.

The Pavilion at Anderson County Park will be the location for Family Day on July 22.

Ezell Cox will assist Billy Davis with the tournaments. One Dollar will be added for tournament awards for winners.

The members unanimously voted to change the Bylaws in order for the membership to elect the club officers in the future rather than the directors appointing officers. The new revision of the Bylaws will be signed at the February meeting.

*Dave Johnson,
TSBA Secretary*



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**February
Speaker:
Warren Turner,
N.S.B.A.**

2006 TSBA Calendar

Please attend TSBA events and join us at the meetings.
Monthly meetings will be held at Shoney's Restaurant, 5420 Clinton Highway. Get off I-75 at Exit 108, head west for about one mile. Turn right onto Clinton Hwy. Shoney's will be on the right.

February 11: Kingston Tournament
February 20: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
February 25: Open Fishing
March 11: Tournament - Cherokee
March 20: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
March 25: Open Fishing
April 17: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
April 22: Open Fishing
April 29: Tailgate Party/Open Fishing
April 30: StriperBowl - Cherokee
May 15: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery
May 20: Open Fishing
May 27: Tournament - Cherokee
June 10: Cherokee Tournament/Campout
June 11: Kids' Fishing Day
June 19: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
June 24: Open Fishing
July 8: Tournament - Fort Loudoun
July 17: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
July 22: Family Day/Open Fishing
August 21: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
August 26: Open Fishing
September 9: Annual TSBA Fish Fry & Reunion
September 16: Open Fishing
October 16: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
October 21: Open Fishing
November 11: Tournament - Cherokee
November 20: Monthly Meeting - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM
November 25: Open Fishing
December 18: Board of Directors Meeting, Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

Do Fish See Color?

Like human eyes, fish eyes have a cornea, iris, lens, and retina. The retina contains rods and cones. Rods are used for night vision. Cones allow for color vision, so fish can see color in varying degrees. The complexity of vision in fish varies from species to species. This is significant because fish locate food primarily by sight. Sound and smell will attract fish, but the final strike is based on sight. Stripers are visual feeders using their sense of sight to locate prey. Because mature fish form schools which requires visual cues, stripers prefer clean water.

Experimenting with color in the quest to find a knock-out lure is a challenge we seem to enjoy. Since fish use vision as the deciding factor to strike, one's offering must be the correct color. Why something works is not as important as just knowing that it does work. Water is much denser than air, so the deeper each color goes the less strength it has because of light diffusion. What does this all mean? Match available food sources, size, and color. Fish can learn to avoid or seek anything they see and associate it either with danger or food. Water clarity controls the depth at which colors fade out. The warmer colors fade out and gradually appear black. Colors disappear in this order: red, orange, yellow, blue, and green.

Dave Johnson

T.S.B.A. 2006 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 ____

Your Name _____

Spouse's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(_____) _____ # of minor children in family _____

E-Mail address _____

Referred By: _____

I have read and agree to abide by and be bound by the Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc. (TSBA) Bylaws*.

* A copy of the Bylaws can be found on the TSBA website at www.TNStripedBass.com or at the offices of the corporation.

(Signature)

(Date)

Enclose a check for \$20.00

Mail to: Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc

P.O. Box 24442

Knoxville TN 37933

Note: All members must sign and submit this membership application with the 2006 dues. Yearly dues are due in January each year. New members that sign up in Oct., Nov., or Dec. will get credit for the remainder of that year and the following year.



The TSBA is a non-profit corporation that supports TW/RA & 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.

**Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 24442
Knoxville, TN 37933**



In order to be sure to receive your March newsletter, please see that your membership dues for 2006 are paid. Thank you.