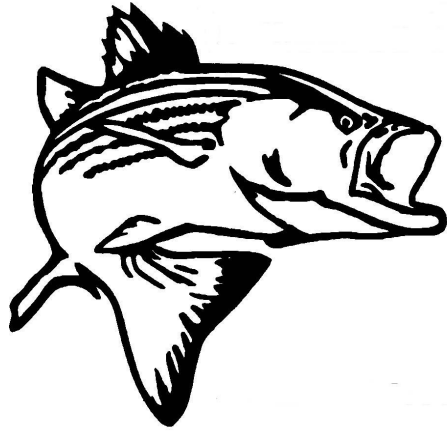


**Catch
the
Striper
Fever!**

T.S.B.A.



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

**August
2012**



Pat Kneiss caught this beauty the last day of July on Norris Lake. It was so heavy that Gary Kneiss had to lift the 41-pound, 44.5-inch fish up for Pat in order to take a picture.

Letter from the Prez

Summer greetings to everyone! The East Tennessee summer has cooled a bit to a more tolerable temperature this July and I am hoping that August will follow suit. The water level in our reservoirs has remained steady during the month, resulting in low flows that have made fishing in the rivers and lakes more challenging. The lake operating guidelines should allow for some draw down this month. Once this occurs, the fishing will most likely improve.

We had another good turnout for the July meeting. Typically the summer meetings have lower attendance, but we again had close to 50 members. Our featured speaker, TWRA Eagle Bend hatchery manager Mike 'Stump' Smith, brought good numbers and information on our striper stocking results. Mike drove the extra miles to Bass Pro on his own time to meet with us and we owe him a big THANKS!



As usual, TSBA members had a lot of questions to ask Hatchery Manager Mike Smith regarding the results of TWRA's striper stocking efforts this year.

The meeting minutes in our newsletter contain some of the highlights of the meeting, but for the whole story try the YouTube private link for all of the details. I continue to be impressed at the number of views by our members. This link can be found on the forum and also at the end of the minutes in this issue.

We are less than two months from the TSBA annual fish fry, which is scheduled for Saturday, October 6, 2012. This is an open weekend for UT football and I am hopeful for a large club turnout. Be sure to mark your calendars for this event. In the mean time, sharpen your hooks, launch the boat or hop on board and Go Fishing!

— Doug Steffe



Jay Girardot took some friends out fishing on Norris Lake this past month. They ended up catching 13 fish that day. The big fish weighed 45 pounds and is an impressive 44.5 inches long. Sometimes it is hard to appreciate just how massive the fish are in these trophy shots, so Jay has included a picture of the four fish together, giving us a good comparison of the 45 pound fish to the other fish which weighed in at about 12 to 15 pounds each.



Minutes of the July meeting

President Doug Steffe opened the meeting by introducing new members and the evening's speaker, Eagle Bend fish hatchery manager, Mike Smith. Mike, who has over 30 years of experience raising and stocking fish, gave a very in-depth presentation about how the hatchery produces our stripers. Smith said this year's striped bass stocking goals were met in all East Tennessee waters and that survival and growth rate for stocked fish should be excellent.

Some fish will also be traded to other states like Ohio and Indiana for musky and other species. Trading fish with other states saves our program money, which is very good management. Tennessee has a year-round growing season. Mike discussed some of the science and biology that is involved at the hatchery, and then he answered all the questions our members had.

After a brief break, Doug Steffe discussed the temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles collected in early July by TWRA at several Norris Lake locations. Striped bass can't tolerate temperatures greater than 80 degrees or dissolved oxygen levels less than 4 ppm for long periods of time. Since incoming river water tends to be quite warm, striped bass will generally move downstream and below the thermocline to find suitable water conditions. Striped bass accumulate stress when living in marginal water conditions as the summer progresses. As a result, most large fish will not survive if they are released after being caught. This is the time of year to take two fish of legal size and go home and have a fish fry.

Many members have been concerned with the number of fish being harvested from Watts Bar Lake. TDEC recommends that no striped bass caught in Watts Bar should be eaten. Doug Steffe visited several boat ramps and bank fishing locations that are popular with striped bass anglers and discovered that fish consumption warning signs were nonexistent, damaged or placed in inconspicuous locations. Jennifer Davis was recognized as the winner of the Striper Bowl. She will be awarded the trophy at a later date.

— Keith Shannon

Be sure to visit our website
www.TNStripedBass.com

View the July Meeting on YouTube: [July 2012 TSBA meeting](#)

August Meeting

Please join us on August 20, 2012 for the TSBA monthly meeting. Member Bud White will be leading a discussion on river and lake fishing. Our meeting location is:

**Bass Pro Shops (Kodak/Sevierville)
3629 Outdoor Sportsmans Place,
Kodak, TN**

Bass Pro Shops is located at Exit 407 on Interstate 40. We will have dinner at 6 p.m. in the restaurant located inside the store. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in a conference room on the second floor.

September Expectations

Expect to find the thermocline developed and getting deeper in the stratified calm waters with 80 + degrees on the surface. Water quality reports sometimes become available by region 4 TWRA biologists on Norris and Cherokee reservoirs in July, August, and September; these are worth looking at to see suitable temperatures with dissolved oxygen at depth.

Striped bass are temperate bass so they seek out the deeper, cooler temperatures until the water column homogenizes top to bottom. The gizzard and threadfin shad will seek out the warmest water they can find and the striper will follow them to feed, then return quickly to their thermal refuge. The alewife will also seek out deeper, cooler water. They can be found by using a good fish finder. The striper and bait-eating birds will be where the bait is most abundant.

Artificial baits can be very productive this time of year. You may want to try jigging or trolling. Umbrella rigs have become a favorite method the last several years. Be safe and aware of the extra activity on the lakes as the other large boats with skiers, wake boarders, and swimmers come out to play also. September is the transition month when school begins, cooler weather and other activities like hunting and football can make the water more enjoyable for fishermen. Large live bait is working well again and normally easy to catch this time of year. Catch and release is questionable in most places.

— **Ezell Cox**

The tip of the limnological iceberg

The following was an email reply to an angler who inquired about the brown, oily-looking water he saw on Norris' water in the springtime. He suspected that it was foul water, caused by a turnover. Most anglers who ask me about it are of the same opinion. He asked for a detailed explanation of it. The following is what I sent:



Paul Shaw, TWRA creel clerk for Norris Lake, is the author of our feature article this month. Paul has worked on Norris Lake, rain or shine, for over 25 years. Ezell Cox describes Paul as someone who not only knows where the fish are located but also why they are there.

That brown, oily-looking slick you are seeing is a plankton bloom, akin to the red tide in the ocean. The difference is, the brown plankton on Norris is not toxic to anything.

A turnover rarely occurs on lakes with a drawdown, such as on Norris. A turnover typically occurs in the fall, with the cooling of surface waters above the thermocline, the epilimnion, as this upper layer is called. There is such thing as a spring turnover, but it occurs when a lake is covered with ice which then melts as spring arrives with warmer temperatures.

When most folks talk of a turnover (or "overturn," as some of the technical books call it), it's the fall turnover they are thinking of. During a fall turnover, the surface water cools, and becoming heavier, sinks throughout the water column, setting up convection currents until the entire epilimnion becomes equalized at a lower temperature. As the cooler season progresses, the epilimnion, thermo-

cline and hypolimnion (that region of water below the thermocline) eventually reach the same temperature, and the lake reaches a fairly homogenous temperature from top to bottom. Wind action can now more effectively stir the lake and mix the water from bottom to top, causing the stains most folks see during the fall turnover. If the weather has cooled abruptly and drastically, the cooling of the surface water can happen relatively fast, and the cooling of the water column can result in the upper layer "dropping" through the depth of the lake. Many people think of the surface as cooling and falling through to the bottom of the lake, causing it to "flip over." This is a misconception, if you think about it, because there is no way that upper layer could maintain its temperature without mixing with the rest of the lake water. It's a simple cooling and mixing that takes effect. If the hypolimnion had little, to no dissolved oxygen, then it can cause problems.

Now, on TVA lakes such as Norris, there is a fall drawdown of the lake. Usually, the hypolimnion is drawn off by the time the lake cools enough to otherwise have caused a turnover (or mixing of the stratified layers, as it could more accurately be called). The oxygen lines which run along the bottom in the fore bay of the lake, and the new generators which churn up some air into the discharge, are meant to keep the tail waters from suffering oxygen depletion during the fall drawdown. As the lake level drops, the hypolimnion is discharged through the dam, and you can see the lowering and expansion of the thermocline at this time (looking at the lake as a funnel, in cross section, lets one visualize that more easily). Depending upon the weather, any mixing that occurs usually happens when the lake is about the same in temperature because of the drawdown, not the effect of a turnover. TVA lakes are unusual critters.

The Spring turnover doesn't occur on Norris, because we have no ice cover. Instead of being caused by a cooling of the surface, a spring turnover is caused by a warming of the water. Taking water temps on an ice-covered lake will show that the temperature is close to the freezing point immediately below the ice layer, but below 4 degrees C, then gets slightly warmer as you drop deeper into

the lake. In some lakes, the bottom temperature will be at maximum DENSITY, 4 degrees C. So in this phenomena, you've got colder but less dense water (being between 0 and 3 degrees C) at the surface, and warmer, but more dense water at the bottom where it is 4 degrees C.

Spring turnover continued: Ok, now imagine the arrival of spring and the ice melting. As the ice melts and warms slightly, the surface water reaches the maximum density temp of 4C, and begins to sink and mix with the warmer water below. In the spring, the weather is usually windy. Winds help mix the water, aiding the cooler, denser surface water to mix through the water column until it reaches the cool, dense bottom water. As this goes on, the cooler (than 4C), but less dense water will rise to the surface where it is warmed to 4C, and will then sink, causing a mixing aided by the wind. The spring turnover is a circulation of water caused by water of different densities mixing, rising, warming to 4C and then falling to continue the mix. Timing depending upon the lake depth and wind, the lake will eventually become the same temperature throughout its depth.

Norris doesn't have a spring turnover. What fishermen see is the plankton bloom which looks an oily brown. It doesn't hurt fishing, at all. It will wind row in coves to form streaks, and can be seen in the bends of the rivers when there's a breeze.

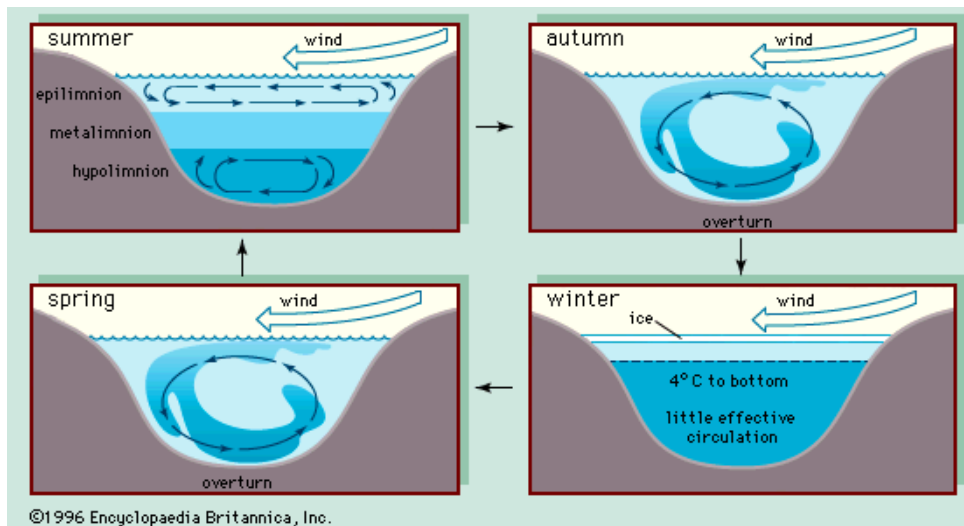
It's been many moons since I took Dr. Dendy's limnology class at Auburn, but I hope I've remembered enough to clarify things a bit. Water columns, layers and movement are fascinating things, and can affect fishing in some instances.

I've noticed the brown plankton blooms in Norris occurring as the water reaches the 50's in the spring, and continuing as the water reaches the low 60's. It's probably caused by a combination of temperature and sunlight, although the two are directly related. I don't think fishermen would notice it, if it weren't for the windrowing effect of the wind, as it would otherwise be more evenly distributed across the lake surface. There are many (emphasize that as MANY) species and genera of plankton found in lakes. There are limnologists

who specialize their work in these critters and in trying to understand their life cycles; some will specialize in certain types of plankton and how it can benefit, for instance, commercial fish production and the flavor of the meat produced. There was a lot of work done on this at Auburn, to help out commercial catfish farmers. Planktons proliferate and diminish with the seasons. Where some produce oxygen and block sunlight in clear reservoirs, anglers can benefit by fishing beneath plankton blooms. How bass, in particular, benefit from it is something somebody may be studying. A good project for a grad student, I'd think!

I hope I haven't bent your ear too much on this, but it's the tiniest of the tip of the "limnological iceberg."

— **Paul Shaw**



This drawing illustrates the general seasonal stratification of a lake. The upper left block shows two distinct layers forming, with no mixing between the two layers. The zone between these layers is a band of rapid temperature change called the thermocline (labeled as metalimnion in this drawing). When the temperatures of the two zones are close enough, the waters begin to mix again to create a uniform temperature.

TSBA would like to thank Paul Shaw for sharing his expertise and knowledge. Paul has summed up an entire college-level limnology course for us!



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Outlook for current fishing spots

CHEROKEE LAKE

The striped bass and alewife will be seeking refuge in cooler, deeper water as the lake warms up into the high 80's. Looking for the large concentrations of baitfish and bait-eating birds is still a good way to find stripers/hybrids, but breaking fish on the surface will slow with only a few showing up early in the morning until later in the month when they are released from their thermal trap. Large schools can often be found on the fish finders, allowing jigging to work well on the main channel points and humps near the dam area. The premium locations are normally downstream near the dam around the underwater humps near the main channel. The larger stripers can be stressed with the warm water and low dissolved oxygen, making it difficult to release these fish successfully. The no fishing zone is in effect until September 15.

NORRIS LAKE

The best tool will be the fish finder as the fish start to go deeper in the water column in search of thermal refuge. The largest concentrations of striper will be in the downstream half of the reservoir and in some of the major deep coves like Cove and Big Creeks, but near deep water main channel humps. The bait eating birds are scarce on Norris to help find the bait but the bait and striped bass will be much easier to locate on the fish finder as they move away from the banks and out of the coves. Good catch and release practice on some of the smaller striper may still be successful by removing the hook quickly while still in the water but release of the larger adult striper is not a good conservation practice. Caution should be used with a harvest and quit plan. The thermal trap on Norris lasts well into October so the best fishing should be deep within a few miles upstream of the dam.

WATTS BAR & MELTON HILL

Fishing in the tail race and downstream river will only get better as the flow at the dams increase and the water cools. The release schedule plays a major role in the quality of fishing below the dams and it seems to be much better with flow. Release schedules can be looked up on the TVA web site to improve your catch rate by being there at the right time. Top water bites can happen all summer in the tailrace and downstream. Limited handling of the fish can improve the survival of released fish. The fish in Watts Bar & lower Clinch Watts bar have contamination warnings so should not be harvested.

— **Ezell Cox**

YOUR 2012 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

President:

Doug Steffe 865-278-2363
dougsteffe@centurytel.net

Vice President:

Cory Malabey 865-659-3947
cmlabey@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Bud White
423-754-0541

Secretary:

Keith Shannon
keith.shannon@gmail.com

Assistant Treasurers:

Allan Franklin and Ann Howe

TSBA DIRECTORS

Todd Asher, Bill Ballou, Jim Blazier, Billy Davis, Erik Engebretsen, Ron Gabler, Jeff Jolly, Eric Rauch, Doug Steffe, and Bud White

TSBA STAFF

Newsletter Printing

& Distribution: Jim Blazier (jblazier@comcast.net) & Bill Ballou

Newsletter Editor:

Sherry Wehner (swehner9@gmail.com)

Membership:

Bud White 423-754-0541
(tn1fishinfool@yahoo.com)

Web Site

Keith Shannon (keith.shannon@gmail.com)

Add Sponsor Coord.

Gary Reinitz 856-278-1046

Public Relations

Allan Franklin 865-805-3120
Ezell Cox 423-626-9547

Tournament Coord.

Todd Asher 865-789-1991
Allan Franklin 865-805-3120

Co-op Supplies and

Raffle Prizes:

Steve Nichols 865-254-7855
kidchevy@comcast.net

Advisor:

Ezell Cox 423-626-9547

2012 TSBA Calendar

Please join us at TSBA meetings and events. Monthly meetings are held the ***Bass Pro Shops (Kodak/Sevierville), 3629 Outdoor Sportsmans Place, Kodak, TN.***

- Aug 20 Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, Tennessee
Topic: River Fishing and Summer Lake Fishing
- Sep 17 Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, Tennessee
Topic: Rigging your boat for striper fishing - Led by D. Steffe
- Oct 6 Annual fish fry - no monthly meeting
- Nov 19 Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, Tennessee
Topic: Striper tackle
- Dec There is no monthly meeting in December.




John Harmeling caught this 40-inch fish in the Big Creek area on Norris Lake.

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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.

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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 163
Sharps Chapel, TN. 37866

Simplified Renewal Note: Returning members with no changes to their contact information are not required to fill out the application. Just send a \$20 check to the address above. Be sure to include the member's name on the check. When you send in your check, please provide TSBA with an email address where we can send your monthly newsletter. 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 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.

**Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 163
Sharps Chapel, TN 37866**



**August 20, 2012: Monthly Meeting
Bass Pro Shops
3629 Outdoor Sportsmans Place
Kodak, TN
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.; meeting at 7:00 p.m.**