

# Tennessee Striped Bass Association

Get Hooked !



May 2017



Monthly Meeting First Monday at Puleo's Grill, 110 Cedar Lane off Merchants Rd. at I - 75

# Members Photos



Dennis and Georgia Bryant having fun April 2017



Cover photo; Ezell with a HOG

# Dues are due for 2017

Paypal Payments can

be sent to: [tennstripedbass@gmail.com](mailto:tennstripedbass@gmail.com)

Join our Facebook group [TN Striped Bass Association](#)

## May Expectations

It's the beginning of the topwater fishing season - records are set and trophies are caught this month!

May is the month that stripers complete their spawn in Tennessee waters. Large baits continue to work great as the stripers try to recover from the stress of the spawning season. Alewife are going to be spawning most of the month, so a topwater wake-bait lure cast to the bank will be great for the night bite. All baitfish will be spawning most of May.

The water temperature is expected to climb into the 70's with a thermocline developing by month's end in reservoirs and still waters. As the water temperature reaches the 70 degree mark, stripers will begin to look for the thermal refuge of cooler water. The surface action can be great and most fish will be caught in very shallow water, ranging from the surface to a depth of 20 feet. This time of year the gulls will become less effective indicators of baitfish, but continue to look for bait-eating birds like herons, loons, egrets, and cormorants.

The warm water discharge found at the steam plants will become less effective as the fish will be moving from these areas to headwaters and major creeks. The tailrace below the dams will develop and only get better through the spring and summer. Remember - caution is needed in the spring as the reservoirs and rivers are on the rise. Be careful and keep a look out for floating debris that could injure you or your boat.

***Ezell Cox***

Norris Dam spilling... 100,000 Gallons per second  
April 25, 2017



TSBA web site <http://tnstripedbass.com/> for the latest news.

# Outlook for current fishing spots

## **Cherokee Lake**

The baitfish seek out the warmer water, so look for the sun-warmed banks and into deeper water after a cool night. The gulls and herons will continue to show where the best bait locations are to be found. Top water breaks are common this time of year, so go prepared to cast into them. Large schools can often be found on the fish finders, making jigging a technique that works well. The premium locations are normally upstream of the German Creek area and into the extreme headwaters.

## **Norris Lake**

Looking for the active gulls or surface feeding fish may be the key to success in catching fish as the water starts to warm in the shallow, sun-warmed areas. Remember the creel and size limits on striped bass are 36-inch minimum with a one fish creel until April 1, 2017. The largest concentrations of striper will be on the upper half of the reservoir, often in the shallow, sun-warmed stained water.

## **Watts Bar and Melton Hill**

The winter time striper bite was influenced much less by the warm water discharge at the steam plants than in some past years because of the mild winter with lots of hydroelectric power. The baitfish will start to show up in the shallow, sun-warmed flats with the gulls and herons helping to find the feeding stripers. Watts Bar creel and size limits remain at a 36-inch minimum size and a one fish creel until April 1, 2017.

Ezell Cox

# Club Meeting; Speakers for 2017

February: James Everett and Michael Hick- TVA River Forecast Center

March: Jim Farmer- Cast Away Bait and Tackle

April: Keith Shannon, Alan Franklin and David Powell- discussion on finding, catching, and keeping live bait

May: Fuzzy Lambert- Humminbird/ Minn Kota Electronics and trolling motors

June: Captain Mack Farr

July: Captain Chadwick Ferrell- Fishing the boils and tailraces tips and tricks

August: TWRA Mike Smith- Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery discussion on striper stocking

September: Club Fish Fry (no regular club meeting) Fish Fry will be at Grainger County Park September 9th

October: Ken Cutsinger with TWRA- Water Safety, First Aid, and boating requirements

November: Open meeting- Year end review and recommendations for 2018

December: Board of Directors meeting (no regular club meeting)

The club is looking for a member in good standing to take over the position of : **web administrator**, Duties include: uploading new content, keeping the information on the website current and accurate by updating. If you are interested contact one of the board members.

# Bucktails in the Spring

By Captain Clay Cunningham

Casting bucktails in early spring can be one of the most effective techniques for catching striped bass. On some days, bucktails will out produce live bait. That is hard for some to believe, but it is very true. The biggest reason bucktails are so effective in the spring is the ability for you as a fishermen to really saturate the prime shallow water. The shallow water will most likely be warmer and as a result this is where the bait will be and the stripes will not be far behind. Furthermore, bucktails allow you to really keep the boat out of the shallow water and avoid spooking the fish. Bucktails also allow the fishermen to work the lure perpendicular to the fish. Most of the time they will be cruising the bank when they are actively feeding on the baitfish. If ten boats are pulling the bank with planer boards, a meal coming from a different direction might look a little more appealing to the fish. Stripers will eat bucktails all winter into the spring but the strongest part of the pattern will be when the water temperature reaches 55 degrees. At this time, the stripers will most likely commit to the shallow water unless you have some kind of severe weather pattern come through the area. Here are few things to keep in mind when casting bucktails in the spring:

## **Pay attention to line size**

An important factor that is often overlooked is line size. Remember the lighter the line the deeper the bucktail will run. During the early part of the spring, smaller bucktails typically better “match the hatch” when it comes to threadfin shad which are most often the bait of choice just about anywhere you go during the last part of winter going into spring. Remember threads are slow swimmers and an easy meal without burning unnecessary energy. If you increase the size of the jig to get to the right depth, many times you will decrease your bites sometimes significantly. Stay with the smaller jig and go to a lighter line to get the appropriate depth.

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## **Two jig colors rule the market**

Next is the color of the jig. Two colors rule the market when it comes to bucktail colors. As you would expect, it is white and chartreuse. These two colors have worked since the beginning of time. In clear water use the white and in murky stained water go with a more chartreuse color. If the water color is just slightly stained go with a white bucktail with a chartreuse back or a white bucktail with some sort of chartreuse flash. Another consideration is the color of the head and the thread of the jig. Personally, I most often use red thread on my bucktails. If the bucktail uses white thread, which is also common, try getting a red permanent marker and make the bottom part of the thread of the bucktail red. This is a trick many use during the hot summer months while trolling big bucktails on leadcore that works all year long. A bucktail that has a red head can also be very productive. At one time, this was one of the most popular jig head colors on the market. It has tapered off over the years in some areas but lures with a red head are as popular as ever especially on the salty side.

## **Keep several different shaped jigs on hand**

Another factor that often gets overlooked is simply the shape and design of the jig. In different years, a slightly different shaped jig will many times get much more action. Different shaped jigs track differently through the water. A striper has a very finely tuned lateral line, which picks up on these slight variations in resistance coming through the water. Also, some head designs have a different rate of fall for the same giving weight. A slower fall in cold water typical of early spring can be a big plus.

## **Modify the bucktail tip**

What you tip your bucktail with is also important. Be sure to take into consideration the movement of the trailer and the color. A good rule of thumb is the colder the water the less movement in the trailer. If the water is below fifty degrees a good trailer to begin with is the Zoom fluke trailer. The fluke trailer comes in many sizes to help match the size of the bait. Typically the fluke Jr. is a good starting point. If the water is clear and the fish are feeding on one inch threads do not be afraid to trim the bucktail with a

pair of scissors and use a fluke size trailer or even the tiny fluke trailer if the hook is small enough. Paddle tail trailers have become the rage the last several years and look like they are here to stay. Paddle tail trailers have always been on the market but the recent success by bass fishermen have caused a multitude of companies to produce paddle tails of every shape and size. Many of the smaller paddle tails now being produced have proven deadly to stripers. As the water temperature rises in the spring, the trailers with more movement like standard curly tails tend to produce more bites. A good one to start with is the Zoom Fat Albert Grub. Another good curly tail grub is the six-inch grub by Capt. Mack. This six-inch grub is especially productive late in the spring as the fish move deeper and their metabolism increases with the increase in water temperature. As always in fishing, this is only a rule of thumb. Some years the fish do not know the rules.

### **Color selection for the trailer**

Now for what color trailer to use while striper fishing. Basically the same rules for bass fishing applies for striped bass when it comes to color choice. For the most part, use trailers that help imitate the natural forage. The most reliable color is white in clear water. Most baitfish are white in color on the bottom side and stripers tend to strike from underneath which is expected since a stripers eyes are located toward the top of the head. White has always been the standby color but each year more and more colors are becoming more popular. More realistic colors like Albino, Green Albino, Smokin Shad, and Baitfish by Zoom are all very good colors in clear water. These Zoom colors are especially popular during the dead of winter when fishermen are using the Fluke style baits. The more vibrant colors are more common in stained water or during periods of low light. This is when the good old color chartreuse shines. Another overlooked color that performs well in low light is a pink trailer. Also, don't be afraid to try different shades of pink and chartreuse. At times, clear chartreuse works better than a solid chartreuse.

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This is just an overview of the many uses of bucktail jigs in the spring. Do not be afraid to try something a little different. Many strange or slightly different colors have come onto the market with surprising results like the Spro Magic Bus. Also do not be afraid to throw a simple jig head tipped with a Super Fluke. Sometimes the jig head with only the trailer (no buck-tail) will perform the best, especially with the more realistic colors that are now on the market.

— *Clay Cunningham*

***Clay Cunningham operates a full time fishing guide service on Lake Lanier, Georgia. This article originally appeared on his website [www.catchingnotfishing.com](http://www.catchingnotfishing.com).***



## TSBA club tournaments

Saturday May 6, Cherokee Lake \$20.00 entry fee. !00% pay out  
Launch at first light ,location to be determined.

Saturday June 17th. Watts Barr, launch below Melton Hill dam  
same format.

# New Members List: Welcome to the club guys

Robert Metz - Harrison, Oh

Frank Zimmerman - Stow, Oh

James Rigney - LaFollette, Tn

Michael Carter - Knoxville, Tn

Michael High - Knoxville, Tn

Lawrence Douglass - Crossville, Tn

Joseph Campbell - Russell Springs, Ky

Jason (Chris) Stansberry - Seymour, Tn

Stuart Bilbrey - Jacksboro, Tn

Melvin Brook - Lily, Ky

Robert Fuller - Charleston, Wv

Tob Trenkamp - Hamilton, Oh

Jacob (Jake) Plasters - Gallipolis, Oh

Josh Treadway - Rockford Tn

Columbus Whaley - Sevierville, Tn

John Galliher - Norwood, NC

Clay Haselton, Kingsport, Tn

Jim Wallace, Knoxville, Tn

John Vincenzo, Knoxville, Tn

Tommy White, Sevierville, Tn

Sam Lanning, Rogersville, Tn

Jacob Lanning, Rogersville, Tn

David Maurer, Guilford IN

Gary Conley, Chapmanville WV

Tracy Templeton - Dandridge, Tn

Brian Oaks - Maynardville, Tn

## **How to Contribute to the Newsletter:**

Please send in any pictures or news that you think would interest club members – we are always glad to hear from you. You can e-mail photos and reports to: [bcbusy@att.net](mailto:bcbusy@att.net) We usually put the newsletter together around the end of the month, but send your information any time and we will work it in.

## Members Photos



Always fun with Ezell

TWRA ramp at Blue Mud, Norris Lake 4-25-2017



# YOUR 2017 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

**President:** David Powell

**Vice President:** Cory Malabey

**Treasurer:** Art Muchow

**Secretary:** Keith Shannon

**Board Chairman:** Eric Rauch

## TSBA DIRECTORS

Bill Ballou, Jim Blazier, Steve Nichols, Cory Malabey, David Powell, Eric Rauch, Allan Franklin, Bob Biscay, Hal Basdekis

## TSBA STAFF

**Newsletter Printing:** Jim Blazier, Larry Nowell & Bill Ballou

**& Distribution:** Jim's email [jblazier@comcast.net](mailto:jblazier@comcast.net)

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**Forum:** David Powell [david@a-plusconstruction.net](mailto:david@a-plusconstruction.net)

**Sponsor Coordinator:** Justin Rose

**Advisors:** Ezell Cox 423-626-9547

Allan Franklin 865-805-3120

# TSBA Sponsors

TSBA. Appreciates all the support we get from our sponsors. If you would like to see your business listed in our newsletter please consider renewing for 2017. TSBA can provide newsletters for our sponsors to distribute. Thanks!



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Clinton, TN 37716

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# TSBA 2017 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.

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Please provide an e-mail address to receive the monthly newsletter:

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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](http://www.tnstripedbass.com) or at the offices of the corporation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

***Enclose a check for \$20.00***

***Mail to: TSBA***

**2954 Lake Forest Circle**

**Talbot, TN. 37877**

**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 club 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.

Tennessee Striped Bass Association  
2954 Lake Forest Circle  
Talbot, Tn. 37877

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