

Catch
The
Striper
fever!

T.S.B.A.



The
Tennessee
Striped Bass
Association
Newsletter

March
2004

**Are You Going To Fish
For The Golden
StriperBowl Cup?**

*Make your plans now to
attend the StriperBowl
Tailgate Party April 17th
and then fish the
StriperBowl on April 18th!!
Details Inside!!*

President's letter

The February meeting of the TSBA was well attended and the room was almost filled to capacity. The first hour of the meeting was devoted to a presentation by the TWRA on the catastrophic die-off of almost all of the bigger striped bass on Norris lake last summer and fall. Basically, the TWRA acknowledged that a major die-off had occurred and that the primary reason was unusually low oxygen levels in Norris during the last half of 2003. The reason for the poor oxygen levels was pinned on the heavy rains that we got last year. These rains washed too many nutrients into Norris which decayed and consumed too much of the vital oxygen. When the hot weather came in August, the stripers had nowhere to go. The oxygen was okay close to the surface but the water was too warm. The deeper water which was cool enough for them did not contain enough oxygen. The smaller stripers, less than 10 pounds, were better able to cope with the warmer waters where the oxygen was sufficient so their survival rate was much higher. The TSBA members of the Norris Lake Advisory Committee had proposed that the TWRA go to a one-fish, 24" limit on Norris year around to help reduce the pressure on Norris and let it recover more quickly. This was rejected by the TWRA, and they did not offer any plans to help Norris recover from this disaster. This response is not acceptable to us, and we need to work with the TWRA to develop a solution that all of the interested parties can support.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted primarily to reviewing our various projects. The dates for all of the projects were finalized and they are given below.

StriperBowl & Tailgate Party	April 17 & 18
Fish Hatchery Tour	May 17
Cumberland River Excursion	May 1 & 2
Camp Out & Kid's Day	June 5 & 6
September Fish Fry	September 11

President's Letter - Cont.

The interest in the Cumberland river excursion, which is a new project for 2004, was quite high as almost a dozen people were interested in participating in it. Basically, we are going to have a caravan of members go over to the Cumberland the weekend of May 1 and 2. We will leave on Friday night April 30 and return on Sunday afternoon. We will be going to the stretch of the Cumberland river near the town of Carthage which is just east of Nashville. Felix Taylor, Ezell Cox, and I are going over in March to scout the area and line up motels and campgrounds. We will probably be fishing both above and below Cordell Hull Dam. Now that Norris has been stripped of its larger stripers, this is probably the best place in Tennessee to have a real chance to catch a big striped bass. We will be asking for a commitment from anyone who wants to go on this excursion so we can line up places to stay. We will try to stay together as much as possible.

Another potential new outing is a tournament with the Perc Priest and the Tim's Ford stripers clubs to be held on Watts Bar. This project is not finalized and there are no details to report. In fact, it may not materialize but we are working on it.

At the next meeting, we are going to have a major discussion on the health of the club. Attendance is up at the meetings. People are responding quite nicely to the new projects, but we have way too many members whose membership has expired who have not renewed. We must turn this around for the club to remain healthy. This must have our highest priority. Basically, we must pay more attention to our new members and keep them coming to the meetings and the events. I have a few ideas that I want to bounce off you for your input.

Another new idea that was presented was to have some form of identification on our boats to let people know that we belong to the TSBA. This was well received and we will come up with a proposal. We are proud of our organization and we want to show it. This should help the membership drive as potential members will see the decal and strike up a conversation.

Bob Leach

Maryland Circle Hook Study

In the February TSBA newsletter, we published a summary of a study performed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Here are the significant results of this excellent research work.

- 1 - There was no difference in the size of stripers caught on non-offset circle hooks and conventional "J" hooks.
- 2 - The deep-hooking rate for conventional hooks was 17.2 % compared to 3.4% for non-offset circle hooks.
- 3 - The mortality rate for deep-hooked striped bass caught with conventional hooks was an astounding 53.1%.
- 4 - **Overall, 9.1% of the striped bass caught and released using conventional hooks died whereas only 0.8% of the fish caught on circle hooks died.**

According to the biologist, the data strongly suggests that the high mortality (9.1%) of striped bass caught and released when the weather is cool is due to the internal damage caused by deep-hooking and not by any stress induced during the catch and release process. However, the stress induced by catching and releasing during warm conditions does significantly increase the mortality rate.

The results that I have reached after studying this and other studies is that we should continue our present technique of Catch & Release during cool conditions and we should catch and keep during warm weather. However, the majority of all deep-hooked stripers will die even if caught when the water and air are cool. The actual mortality is higher than the reported 53.1% rate as that was the mortality for the 72 hour holding period. Many of the deep-hooked stripers released by cutting the line will have great difficulty swallowing a shad when they have a hook in their throat.

From this point on, I am going to keep all deep-hooked stripers as I think the vast majority of them will die if they are released.

Bob Leach

Hookup Rate Study

The results of the Maryland Circle-Hook study, discussed in the February & March newsletters, parallels the results of other studies conducted on this mortality issue. The real culprit to high mortality rate during cool conditions is the injury caused by deep-hooking. The reason that circle hooks reduce the injury rate is that they tend to lip-hook the stripers. However, in all of my research on circle hooks, I have not found any scientific studies to determine their hookup rate compared to conventional hooks. It looks to me as if you will catch fewer stripers using circle hooks but I don't know that. Also, if the hookup rate is lower, is the percent reduction significant? To me, these are important questions as you cannot deny the survival rate benefits of circle hooks. Therefore, the TSBA is going to conduct a major test in 2004 to determine the relative hookup rates for circle and conventional hooks. Also, I plan to study the effects of using treble hooks to determine their hookup and deep-hooking rates. All data will be recorded on standardized data sheets. Basically we will go out with various club members and fish with three identically-rigged setups, one with a circle hook, a treble hook, and a conventional "J" hook. Great pains will be taken to be sure that the three poles are fished simultaneously with equal water time. We will record each time a bait is hit and fill in a code to indicate what happened. The four possibilities are: "NO" for no hookup or the fish got off, "LL" for a landed lip-hooked striper or hybrid, "LD" for a landed deep-hooked striper or hybrid, and "EQ" for equipment failure like the line breaking. A hit will occur whenever the pole bends sharply, the bait is damaged even though we did not see the hit or the bait is visibly hit on the surface. We would like to obtain a minimum of 500 hits to make the results statistically significant. Hopefully this will give us a clearer picture of how we can minimize the mortality rate and still have a good hookup rate.

Bob Leach

Kingston Tournament Results

Considering the weather, we had an excellent turnout for this year's tournament. There were 16 participants who weighed 13 fish. More fish were caught and released. The overall winner was Shawn McNew with 37.6 pounds, second was Brian Thames with 32.4 pounds, and third was Wess Adams with 28.5 pounds. The big fish went to Brian Thames with a 22.4 pound prize. The weather was cold with rain, wind, and snow. Three or four fish were in the 20 pound range. Better than 90 percent of the fish were released alive. Thanks to everyone.



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



2004 TSBA Calendar

*Mark
Your
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.

March 15: Monthly Meeting

Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

April 17: StriperBowl Tailgate Party

April 18: StriperBowl - Cherokee

April 19: Monthly Meeting & Boating Safety

Seminar - Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

May 1-2: Cumberland River Excursion

May 17: 6 PM Monthly Meeting & Tour at Fish

Hatchery in Clinton - Pizza and Drinks

June 5-6: Cherokee Family Campout

& Kid's Day - Cherokee

June 21: Monthly Meeting

Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

July 19: Monthly Meeting

Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

August 16: Monthly Meeting

Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

September 11: T.S.B.A. Fish Fry and Reunion

Anderson County Park on Norris Lake

October 18: Monthly Meeting

Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

November 15: Monthly Meeting

Dinner: 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

December: No Monthly Meeting

Letter from the Secretary

I would like to take the time to tell you a true story. Janine and I were fishing Pike Lake in Southeastern Wisconsin on a Saturday morning. As we trolled down the bank casting, we passed a dock with a young child sitting on it. He began to tell us how his grandfather fished with him, taught him how to fish, and what type the fish were. He was lonely because as he explained his grandfather had died, and he could no longer fish with his grandfather. But he had a wonderful memory of a kind man who took the time to teach him how to fish. Isn't that what our goal is with Kid's Fishing Day and how the StriperBowl financially supports Kid's Fishing Day?

Please, if you can, help support our goal and help bring a smile to a child and a foreverlasting memory. Thank you.

Dave Johnson

Official StriperBowl Sponsors



Joe Giza
Sales Director

2512 East Andrew Johnson Hwy.

Morristown, TN 37814

(423) 587-2200

Fax (423) 587-9752

1-800-DAYS INN

mail@morristowndaysinn.com

www.morristowndaysinn.com



"Best Value in Town"

The TSBA is happy to announce that the Days Inn and Super 8 Motels in Morristown are official sponsors of the 2004 StriperBowl to be held on the weekend of April 17-18. We expect a large turnout for this event, and we encourage all of our out-of-town members to patronize these two motels. The motels are ideally located on the East Andrew Johnson Highway just a few miles from the Oak Grove boat ramp. To get to the motels, get off 25E at Exit 2B and go North. You can see the Days Inn sign from the exit. The TSBA rates for the Days Inn and Super 8 are \$49.00 and \$39.88, respectively. They have a very large parking lot which can easily accommodate your vehicle and boat. There is a restaurant within walking distance. Other amenities include a heated outdoor swimming pool, free local telephone calls, remote-control TV with free HBO and a free continental breakfast. The tailgate party will be held at the Super 8 motel on the evening of April 17. You won't want to miss this very special event as there will be refreshments and the extremely popular poem contest. All your seldom-seen friends will be there, so plan to stay at the motel and join in the festivities. We are planning a few surprises for this year's party which you don't want to miss.

Please call Joe or Ray at the number above and make your reservation for the StriperBowl or anytime you plan to fish Cherokee. These guys are very fisherman-friendly, and they are experienced at hosting fishing events.

Mark
Your
Calendar

StriperBowl Tailgate Party

April 17th

(Night before the StriperBowl)

6:30 to 8:30pm

Super 8 Motel in Morristown

Join your fellow TSBA members
for a fun filled evening!

**Lots to EAT!!

**A BIG StriperBowl Cake and Soft Drinks!!

**Poetry contest winners will share their poems!

**Even a song or two!!! **Door prizes!

**Bring the whole family!

**Plenty of parking for your boat!

**Don't miss the fun!!

And then...

The StriperBowl !!!!

April 18th

First Safe Light at Oak Grove on Cherokee Lake

Registration 1/2 hour before Event

Mandatory meeting 10 minutes prior to start

\$10 Entry Fee -- Members Only

All proceeds go to support the
Kids Fishing Day on June 6th

Don't Miss Out!!
It's time to order your
StriperBowl T-shirts!!!

All orders will be ready for pick-up at the
Tailgate Party on April 17th
or available at the StriperBowl on April 18th.

*This years StriperBowl shirts are a sage green with
full color screen printing front and back.*

Advanced, paid in full, orders only

Orders must be received no later then March 27th.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Adult Shirts

Number of Shirts (*adult size small*) _____ X \$18.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size medium*) _____ X \$18.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size large*) _____ X \$18.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size xtra-large*) _____ X \$18.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size 2X*) _____ X \$20.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size 3X*) _____ X \$22.00 = \$ _____

Orders that will not be picked up by the StriperBowl event can be picked
up at the meeting on April 19th or *mailed AFTER the StriperBowl..

*If you need mailing add \$3.00 per shirt - Only include shipping if unable
to pick up. ----- Shipping\$* _____

Order Total \$ _____

Make checks payable to "Kept In Stitches"

. Do not send cash!

Mail to: StriperBowl Shirts

c/o Kept In Stitches

2048 Eckles Drive, Maryville, TN 37804

NORRIS STRIPER DISASTER LATE SUMMER 2003

Apparently, everyone is not convinced to the same degree that I am of the terrible loss of large stripers on Norris Lake. Norris is my favorite lake to fish for stripers and the one on which I know the most about catching large stripers year around. My history on Norris goes back to 1977 fishing exclusively for stripers as many as 250 days per year. Some past years have produced 400 stripers over 20 pounds from summer to end of year.

Now that you understand what I could hope for, I will tell you how bad it is. A few fish in the 20 to 30 pound range were boated in the first two weeks of August 2003 but since then to present none that has exceeded 15 pounds. It is very early into this disaster, so my speculation will hopefully need to be updated later with a better message. I think we lost more than 95% of the steeper population that exceeded 12 pounds. I also think that the total number lost may have been 30,000. The fish that were less than 10 pounds seem to have survived and continue to be healthy, although the copepod infestation is ugly. My guess is the parasite did not kill the stripers but may have contributed to a small percentage of the dead. The dead stripers started floating in early August and continued through most of November. Although I have seen some steeper mortality in past summers, this one was many times worse than all the rest put together. The loss of 30,000 stripers may not be significant if they are fingerlings from the 102,000 stocked each year. The stripers that were lost were aged 5 to 25 years old. With the hope of a once in a lifetime failure of the oxygen at a depth that had cool water last summer, the lake can grow a few 30 pound fish from the 12 pound in about 5 more years - a total of 10 years. I am doubtful the system will recover the 40, 50, and even 60 pound fish for my retirement years of enjoyment. I am not a scientist, biologist, or hydrologist but very well studied on striped bass and Norris Lake's elevations, flow, lake turnover, oxygen, and

temperature at depth, thermocline, and summer funnel effect for the purpose of catching large stripers.

What happened and what can we do about it? I hope and think it is a once in a lifetime failure of oxygen to be in water that was cool enough to sustain stripers larger than 10 pounds or 30 inches in length. The lake elevations averaged more than 10 feet above normal and remained higher than I have ever seen for over 30 years. The growth of plankton and algae helped deplete the oxygen as it decomposed. The spill over the top of the dam was at its peak in history. The surface water that is spilled over the top has the highest oxygen content. Since the only place dissolved oxygen can enter water is through the surface or lake turnover in the late fall, much of the oxygen rich water from the surface was spilled over the dam. When the draw down of cold water continued through the summer, it did not expand the oxygen rich surface from above the thermocline to depths it had in past years (FUNNEL EFFECT). Normal flow through of water from the Clinch or Powell Rivers to Norris Dam is about one year, but 2003 was much faster. T.V.A. or T.W.R.A. could not have done anything to prevent the problem after it had already developed and was recognized. I think the two ways to improve the striper quantity and quality is to improve the striper fishermen catch and release success and reduce harvest. T.W.R.A. could help a lot. The Norris Lake Advisory Committee formed by T.W.R.A. has already voted unanimously to change the creel limit to one fish year around 25 inches. As indicated by last summer's survival of 30 inch fish, this could work. The other suggestion is to increase the stocking numbers back to the 5 fish per surface acre that we had before the moratorium. Striper fishing on Norris is going to get bad, even with a lot of help from everyone. I hope my disappointment did not show too badly as I tried to inform everyone of what I think I know.

Ezell Cox

April Expectations

The Striper's movement and activity will be related to pre-spawn and warming water temperatures. Migration upstream to the rivers and major feeder creek currents will also keep the attention of the striper. The pre-spawn bellies will stay big through April in the natural rivers. As the 70 degree water temperature is reached, the spawn will take place and the big stripers will slowly start back down stream. The tailrace below the dams will develop and only get better through the spring and summer. Large live and artificial baits presented on top will create some very large explosions. Records and trophies are caught this month.

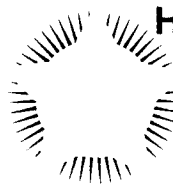
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Kingston: A Day to Remember

This year's Kingston Tournament was a day I will always remember. I spoke up in favor of having it; therefore, I got the assignment to run it. Having never put on a tournament, I was having a bit of self doubt but charged on ahead. I pre-fished Kingston twice - once with a friend I was planning to bring on tournament day and once with Ezell and Allan. Both pre-fish trips drew blanks as far as Stripers were concerned. That made me more nervous.

The day before the tournament I had my friend come over with his small, fast boat so we could catch bait for the tournament. When he pulled up out front there was a noticeable crack in the foot of his outboard rendering the small, fast boat useless. I made arrangements to meet him in Kingston the next day and headed from Maryville to Cherokee to pick up an alternate boat (Cathy's pontoon) and some bait. I got some smallish bait and the boat and went to bed in the camper at Cherokee.

The next morning I headed for Cherokee armed with hot coffee, bait and the pontoon. I had to stop for a few drinks and snacks for the tournament and got to Kingston City Park at a respectable time all considered. I got there just as the rain started and set up my coffee and goodies under a pavilion and started taking entries and monies. When registration was done we had 16 enter and a little harder rain. My friend did not show and Allan's party did not so I parked the pontoon and fished with him. And it rained harder. The forecast earlier in the week called for near 50 and sunny. Nope it rained harder and the wind blew.

Shawn and Darren gave a clinic on catching skipjacks and producing stripes. Bob gave a clinic on losing planer bottles. And the rain continued. Allan and I both caught 2 fish each and distributed them in the Striper Tube and bait tank for the ride back to the ramp. By the end of the time I was wet and cold but felt good about our catch - 'til I saw the other catches. Allan and I were both well down the list of winners. And the rain turned to snow.

First place Shawn McNew 37.6 lbs, 2nd Brian Thames 32.4 lbs, 3rd Wess Adams 28.5 lbs. Big fish was Brian Thames 22.4 lb Striper. And the snow fell harder. In all 13 fish were weighed in with all but 2 or 3 released alive.

Thanks to all who attended my first tournament. Hope to do it again.

Next is STRIPERBOWL. Bring on the rain.

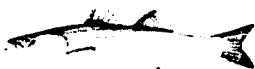
Felix Taylor

Coming Soon

BOATING SAFETY SEMINAR

Ken Cutsinger, our T.W.R.A. Wildlife Officer, will be our guest speaker at the April 19th T.S.B.A. meeting. Come and join us. Boating safety is of the utmost importance as we enjoy our sport of fishing with our families and friends.

Fishing Hot Spots



CHEROKEE LAKE:

The water level is rising with surface temperature of 41.6 degrees. The water is a stained color. Striped bass and Cherokee bass are in the areas of Point 8 to Point 15 and Point 19 to Point 23. Most are caught trolling with red fins, white or yellow jigs with twister tails grubs. If casting, use Hopkins or silver spoons. Watch for surface breaks or feeding gulls.

NORRIS LAKE:

Both river arms are mud-stained. There are still enough logs and branches floating on the upper river sections to be a danger to boaters. STRIPED BASS catches continue to be slow. The sudden chill and muddy conditions over much of the lake have hindered fish catching.

MELTON HILL:

Fair. Some good catches have been reported above the Hwy 61 Bridge on the upper Clinch. The majority of the good catches have either been early morning or late evening (daylight or dark). There is debris present all over the reservoir, especially near the lower end of the reservoir.
<http://www.state.tn.us/twra/eastfish.html>

Fishing Line Survey

Question: What brand fishing line do you use?

Results:

#1 BERKLEY TRILENE 16

#2 STREN 9

#3 P-LINE 5

SPIDER WIRE 2, CABELAS 2,

YO-ZURI 1, ANDE 1, REMINGTON 1



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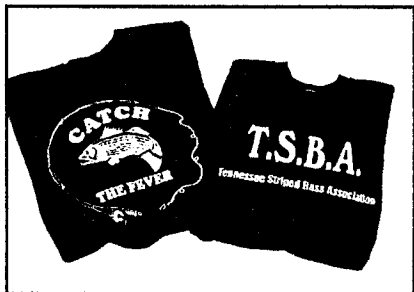
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Maynard & Delbert Brooks

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 _____

Address _____

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 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*kids size large 14-16*) _____ X \$8.00 = \$ _____

Adult Shirts

Number of Shirts (*adult size small*) _____ X \$12.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size medium*) _____ X \$12.00 = \$ _____

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

Number of Shirts (*adult size xtra-large*) _____ X \$12.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size 2X*) _____ X \$14.00 = \$ _____

Number of Shirts (*adult size 3X*) _____ X \$16.00 = \$ _____

Adult Sweatshirts

Number of *adult size medium* _____ X \$22.00 = \$ _____

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

Number of *adult size xtra-large* _____ X \$22.00 = \$ _____

Number of *adult size 2X* _____ X \$24.00 = \$ _____

\$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**

2048 Eckles Drive, Maryville, TN 37804

YOUR 2004 TSBA OFFICERS AND STAFF

President:

Robert Leach 865-471-1365
Robert@TNStripedBass.com

Vice President:

Felix Taylor 865-981-2827
Felix@TNStripedBass.com

Treasurer:

Janine Johnson

Secretary:

Dave Johnson

TSBA STAFF

Newsletter: Janine Johnson Janine@TNStripedBass.com

Public Relations: Allan Franklin 865-694-8888
Ezell Cox 423-626-9547

Merchandising: Cathy Taylor 865-981-2827

Advertising: Amy Stevens 865-426-8509

T.S.B.A. 2004 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: _____

Enclose a check for \$20.00

**Mail to: T.S.B.A. PO Box 962
Norris Tennessee 37828**



The TSBA is a non-profit organization, that supports WRA & 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
PO Box 962
Norris, Tennessee 37828

Reminder:
Fishing Licenses expired
on February 29.

