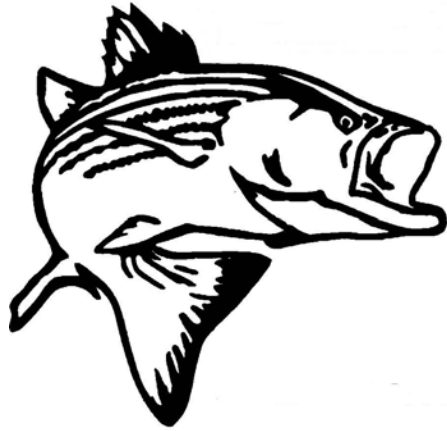


**Catch
the
Striper
Fever!**

T.S.B.A.



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

**April
2012**



TSBA Advisor, Ezell Cox, had a very enjoyable day out fishing with Doug Steffe in early April. The two landed a mess of fish that averaged weights in the low teens. The fish Ezell is holding in the photo measured 37 inches long and weighed over 20 pounds.

Letter from the Prez

When I first joined the TSBA, I recall that my definition of fishing meant that if I was lucky enough to catch it, I kept any legal fish. To me, this was what the fishing reward was all about. As the years went by, the influence from fellow TSBA members began to change my understanding of the fishing reward. I began to catch-and-release with the same satisfaction as catch-and-keep. I also realized that the bigger the fish released, the bigger my smile and greater the reward. My wife could not believe that I was coming home after a good day of catching without any fish to clean!

I truly believe that an important purpose of our club involves the preservation of the wonderful, but limited, striped bass resource we enjoy in East Tennessee. Our numbers of catchable fish will decline if we all harvested every keeper on every trip - especially as our membership and skills increase. The most desirable catch for most of our members is a large fish. This class of striped bass can take 5 or more years to develop into a skilled predator that will continue to grow if not harvested. While our club culture does not discourage the harvesting of a reasonable number of fish, we do encourage the release of the larger fish.

We ask our members to consider the lake they are fishing when they harvest their catch. Lakes such as Cherokee and Boone get good stocking numbers and have an abundance of forage food. Lakes such as Norris are not only stocked at a lower rate but also have less of a forage base per acre. By releasing the larger stripers, you allow for the continued growth and recycling of our resource. Hopefully the same fish will be enjoyed by another angler who will in turn do the same as you and release that trophy fish. Remember the acronym CPR (Catch, Picture, Release) the next time you land a large fish. It is a win-win situation: the angler gets a great fishing reward and it is definitely a lifesaver for the fish.

The more you fish, the more your catch, the more the TSBA culture will be absorbed.... So, life is way too short: remember to take the time and GO FISHING!

— Doug Steffe

May Expectations

Expect to see the thermocline develop in the stratified, calm waters with 80+ degrees at the surface and cooler temperatures deeper. Striped bass are temperate bass, so they will seek out the cooler water temperatures. The gizzard and threadfin shad will seek out the warmest water they can find and the striper will follow them to feed. The alewife will be spawning this month, so nighttime bites will be at a premium on the reservoirs. The gulls, cormorants and herons can be a great help in locating the bait fish. The striper will be where the bait is most abundant. Artificial baits can be very productive this time of year. You may want to try JIGGING, CASTING, OR TROLLING. Umbrella rigs have become a favorite method the last several years.

Be aware of the new hazards floating on top of the water as the lakes begin to rise. Large live bait is working well again and normally easy to catch this time of year. Put the out-riggers (planer boards) back in the boat. You'll need them to get the bait into the shallow water without spooking the fish and also to cover a much larger area.

— **Ezell Cox**



President Doug Steffe encourages all TSBA members to practice CPR on large fish. Before you get in a lip-lock with your next catch, be sure to read this month's Letter from the Prez to find out just what kind of CPR he is talking about! Doug is holding a fine catch he made on Norris Lake. Just think: since Doug practices CPR, this fish is still out there, waiting for you to catch it.

Consider adding musky lures to your tackle box



Billy Davis, pictured above, with the 52-pound striper he caught while fishing for muskies using a Musky Innovations Shallow Diver lure.

While musky fishing on Melton Hill, I was casting into some trees when I noticed a fish swirling and immediately tossed my Musky Innovations Shallow Invader at the swirl. While retrieving my lure, I went into a figure 8 formation and the fish suddenly surfaced and inhaled the lure. At first I thought it was a musky, but then realized this fish pulled too hard to be a musky. As I got the fish to the boat, I realized I needed to net it because of how heavy it was. We quickly weighed the fish and let her go. She pulled the bogas to 52 lbs. It was an extremely fat fish and went back strong into the 61 degree water. I have had success over the years throwing this type of lure for stripers. They have a really good action and they are an effective bait in the rivers below Melton Hill and Fort Loudon Dams. Shallow invaders are a really good tool to use if you are out of live bait or just want to fish without having to go through the trouble of keeping bait.

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The Shallow Invader, pictured above and left, is a “hybrid lure” that combines a hard crank-bait head with a soft plastic body and tail. It creates a serpentine motion when pulled through the water. The tail portion of the lure is replaceable. The two colors I like to throw for stripers are the Silver Shad and Tennessee Shad.

If you have any questions about using musky lures for stripers feel free to email me at billy@tnmuskies.org.

— **Billy Davis**

April Meeting

Please join us on April 16, 2012 for the TSBA monthly meeting. Our guest speaker will be Bill Carson.

TSBA's monthly meeting will be held in a private room at the Flat-water Grill restaurant in Oak Ridge. This room is best entered through the side door near the railroad bridge. The buffet dinner will start at 6:00 p.m., with the meeting to follow at 7:00 p.m. The cost is \$15, which includes a drink and gratuity. (Note that payment is cash or check only).

Minutes of the March meeting

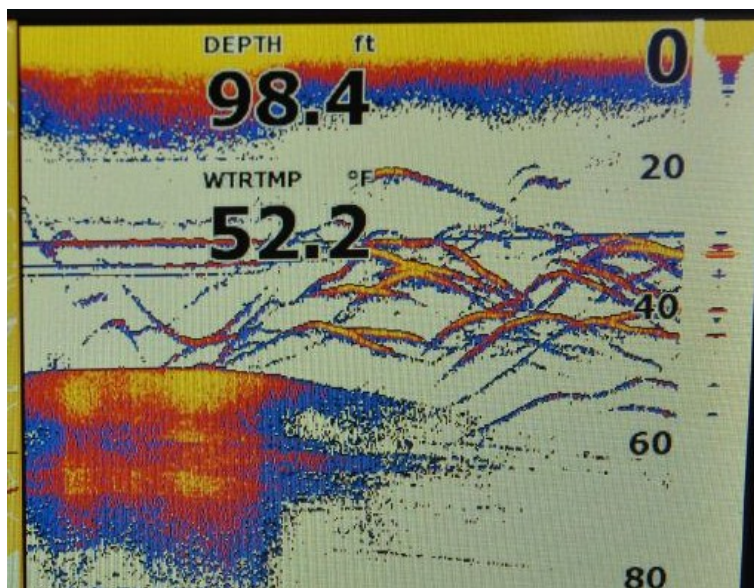
TSBA's monthly meeting was held at the Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge, TN on March 19, 2012. Approximately 40 members attended the meeting. President Doug Steffe opened the meeting and introduced several new members as well as the first guest speaker of the night, TWRA Commissioner Harold Cannon.

Commissioner Cannon gave a brief presentation on current and pending state legislative actions. He stated that TWRA has been renewed by the State Senate for four additional years and on July 1, 2012, a vote will be held to either keep or dissolve the Commission. Moreover, he said no further action had been taken with regard to the commercial fishing proposal.

The night's featured speaker was Clay Cunningham, a guide on Lake Lanier in Georgia. Clay's presentation focused on artificial baits, using lead core line and how to modify bait presentations according to changes in environmental factors. Afterward, Clay fielded questions from the audience, primarily on umbrella rigs.

After a brief recess, members shared fishing reports and voted to purchase a new TSBA banner.

— **Keith Shannon, Secretary**



This beautiful photo was submitted by Dave Studzinski.

At our last meeting, I had the pleasure of being introduced to new member Ed Kister. The following is an open letter written by Ed to our members:

On February 27, I caught my first striped bass while fishing with Ezell Cox. Ezell had called and invited me along that morning, noting that he wanted to check the upper lake for fish. The air temperature was cool, a little foggy and the water color was stained from the previous day's rain.



Ed Kister, author of this open letter to the club, poses with his first striped bass: a beauty weighing in at 17 pounds and 31 inches long.

We put in at a launch ramp on the upper end of Cherokee Lake, known to TSBA members as the "White Church Ramp." We headed up the lake in search of fish. One of the many things I found out about Ezell was that he is constantly observing the water temp, color and depth while at the same time observing the gull or heron activity or sometimes the lack of activity. We saw very few fish so Ezell continued to search by looking for gulls, herons or schools of bait fish. After searching with very little success, Ezell decided it was time to head downstream.

We found some fish rising in an area near what used to be called the Cherokee Marina. We baited up and put the lines out. We did not have any luck and we decided it was time to pull the lines in and look elsewhere. As we pulled in the lines, Ezell was talking to one of his many friends and they told us there was some activity near Point 22. The sun came out as we headed south again and the rest of the day was spectacular.

I'm certainly looking forward to fishing with Ezell again sometime. I could not possibly retain all the information Ezell shared with me that day, but I'll keep forever the memory of catching that first striped bass. Thanks again, Ezell!

— Jim Blazier

Trophy shots



Member Allan Franklin's youth outreach program has gone international. He recently had an opportunity to introduce two foreign exchange students from Spain to East Tennessee striper fishing. Joseba Estalayo, above left, is holding his first fish. Michael Boltz, above right and below, was thrilled with his first striper catch.





The cold days of January are probably now a distant memory for Allan Franklin, above, and Farrell Adams (below). They snapped these photos while fishing on Norris.



The TSBA web site has been rebuilt by Keith Shannon.
Access it at **www.TNStripedBass.com**.
Log in with your real name to register with your own
unique password.



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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. The warmer than normal weather with higher than normal rainfall also will have the fish pushed back downstream a little quicker than normal years. Night time bites are also at a premium with the alewife spawn going on.

Norris Lake

Looking for large schools of baitfish or surface feeding action may be the key to success in catching fish as the water starts to warm in the shallow, sun-warmed areas. Creel and size limits changed back to the statewide regulations on striped bass as of April 1, 2012. The largest concentrations of striper will be on the upper half of the reservoir, often in the large, deeper coves with creeks feeding into the lake.

Watts Bar and Melton Hill

The striper bite in the tailrace and downstream river will develop this month and only get better as we go into the early summer. The baitfish have started to show up in the shallow, warm flats and coves with herons to help find the feeding stripers. Watts Bar creel size and limits changes back to the statewide regulations on April 1, 2012.

FISHING REGULATIONS

New fishing licenses were required by March 1, 2012. It is your responsibility to know the rules and stay legal. Changes are normal in the management of our fishing each year, and those changes also go into effect on the first of March. The NO FISHING ZONE will be enforced between July 15 to September 15, 2012 on Cherokee Lake. Each body of water may have exceptions you need to be aware of before exposing yourself to a fine. There are some seasonal striped bass CREEL AND SIZE limit changes that take place April 1st and November 1st. Go online to Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency at www.tnwildlife.org or pick up a 2012 Fishing Regulations book at sporting stores or TWRA offices. Wearing life preservers are required below the dams and a good habit anytime on the water for personal safety.

— **Ezell Cox**

YOUR 2012 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

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2012 TSBA Calendar

Please join us at TSBA meetings and events. Monthly meetings are held at the Flatwater Grill at 100 Melton Lake Peninsula in Oak Ridge, Tennessee (<http://theflatwatergrill.com>).

| | |
|--------|---|
| Apr 16 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m. The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge Speaker: Bill Carson - Fishing methods |
| May 21 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m. The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge Speaker: Mike Smith, Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery |
| Jun 18 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m. The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge |
| Jul 16 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m. The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge |
| Aug 20 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m. The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge |
| Sep 17 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m. The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge |
| Oct 6 | Annual fish fry - No monthly meeting |
| Nov 19 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m. The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge |
| Dec | There is no monthly meeting in December |

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TSBA 2012 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.

Your Name _____

Spouse's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

Referred By: _____

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

E-Mail address _____

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**



**April 16, 2012: Monthly Meeting
Flatwater Grill
100 Melton Lake Drive, Oak Ridge
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.; meeting at 7:00 p.m.**