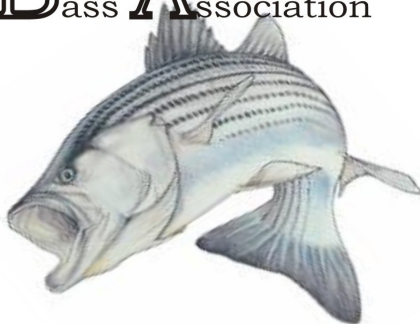


Tennessee Striped Bass Association

Get Hooked !



January/February 2021



Tim Blanton with a U-rig striper on Norris.

Virtual Monthly Meeting on first Mondays:

(Check your email for a zoom link a few days prior to meeting)

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

Submit news items to tsba.newsletter@gmail.com

Join us on Facebook [Tennessee Striped Bass Association](#)

January 2021 Board of Directors Meeting

On Monday, January 4, the 2020 TSBA Board members met virtually to discuss plans for 2021. It was determined that, due to COVID, all board members and officers would continue in their current roles through 2021. It was also decided that the club would meet, virtually, on the first Monday of each month. Links for the monthly meetings will be emailed to members a few days prior, and recordings of the meetings will be available on the members-only Facebook page.

February 2021 Club Meeting

On Monday, February 1, the TSBA held a virtual meeting. Speaker Ezell Cox presented 'Best Practices with U-Rigs.' Highlights are as follows:

- First, Tennessee law stipulates that U-rigs can have a maximum of 3 baits with hooks.
- Baits with hooks should be run 6-12" behind the teaser baits.
- White, chartreuse or pearl baits between 2 1/2– 3 1/2 inches long with paddle tails (or similarly sized buck tails) are most effective.
- If you find fish in shallow (less than 20') creeks or coves, small light rigs work very well.
- Although suitable for year-round fishing, U-rigs tend to be most effective in cold water making them especially useful for winter fishing.
- Ideal trolling speed is between 2.5 –3.5 miles per hour.
- 8 1/2—9' heavy-action rods and reels with 80# or heavier braid are recommended. Such heavy tackle enables the user to retrieve U-rigs from snags.
- Tie line directly to the U-rig or use snaps of at least 100# test.
- You can vary the depth at which your U-rig runs by changing the boat speed, U-rig weight, and/or the length of line. This takes some experimentation. You can determine the depth at which your bait is running by bumping the bottom in water of a known depth or by having someone follow you and marking the depth with their sonar.
- When you mark fish on your sonar, note their depth and position the U-rig at or slightly above the fish.
- A powerful sonar unit with side scan will help you find fish. On units with adjustable frequency, lower frequency settings enable you to mark fish at a greater distance from the boat.
- As is standard protocol for winter fishing, look for seagulls. They already know where the fish are.

If you missed the meeting, you can find a recording on the members-only Facebook page.

March 2020 Meeting Upcoming

Join us on Monday, March 1, at 7pm for our monthly club meeting. You will receive the zoom link by email a few days prior. Speaker is not yet determined, but it's sure to be informative!



Tim with a pair of U-rig strippers!

Fishing With Umbrella Rigs

(We've featured this before, but it's good timely info related to our February meeting topic!)

There are a lot of questions being asked about umbrella rigs (u-rigs) since it has become common knowledge how effective they are to catch fish. The attempt is to make it look like a school of small baitfish swimming by with the one in the rear struggling to keep up to create a reaction type bite. Umbrella rigs are defined as an array of more than 3 artificial lures or baits (with or without hooks) used by a single rod and reel combination.

Tennessee is one of the states that have SPECIAL REGULATIONS because of how effective they are. The regulation is the u-rig may only have up to three hooks per rod. Single point, double point, and treble (3 points) hooks would each be counted as one hook.

This will be a short summary of a set up and trolling of the u-rigs since there are about as many variations as there are fishermen that use them.

Start out with the umbrella frame that that will have multiple places to attach lures and teasers. A common 4 arm frame made by Eagle Claw has 9 places to attach lures and teasers. Two on each arm of the frame and the lure with the single hook in the center of the frame is trailed at least 12 to 18 inches behind the teasers. The lures and teasers are the normal color, size, shape, and action that catch fish casting and trolling. Jigs with curly tails, blades, swim baits, and spoons all seem to work in the right location. You can just cut the hook off for the teasers. Attach the teasers on the ends of the umbrella frame as close to the arm as possible and still get the desired action from the teaser. The teasers half way in on the arm should trail behind the outside teasers by at least 4 inches. The lure with the hook should be in the center of the frame trailing behind the rest by 12 to 18 inches. You can also use another two lures with hooks on the arms giving you a total of three hooks for the rig. I use 40 to 50 pound mono or braided line up to 100 pound test to attach the lure so I can just grab the frame and lift a quite large fish right into the boat with it. The completed u-rig cost should be twenty to forty dollars.

Depth of trolling presentation methods for surface to 30 foot depth is often done by weight of the umbrella rig (one to fifteen ounces), boat speed, and length of line let out. The common practice is to pull a u-rig from each side of the rear of the boat. Down riggers can be used also for depth control of the umbrella rig. Skill and knowledge with a good fish

finder and boat control also allows for some tricks to improve the fishing and pole bending. Tricks include doing zigzag moves, kicking the motor out of gear in order to get to deeper fish, and going in circles that cause the inside u-rig to slow and sink lower and the outside to speed up.

There are those that would argue that fish are frightened or shy away from line size and maybe the u-rig frame but that does not seem to hold any merit with this reaction type bite. There are tools sold to retrieve hung up u-rigs that are effective but here is another option. The heavy braid lines can be used to pull the u-rig and then if it gets hung up just tie the heavy braid line to a cleat on the boat and use the motor to recover it for repair. I use a very inexpensive 9 foot stiff rod & reel with line counter combination for around sixty dollars spooled with 100 pound braid. The first thing you want to make sure of is the connections strength when planning to use the braid for a rope to pull the u-rig and then pull it loose. Some of the swivels, snap latches, and split rings that come with the u-rigs are just not designed that heavy duty.

— *Ezell Cox*



Creel and Size limits

CHEROKEE LAKE

Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass:

2 per day in combination, 15 inch minimum length limit

NORRIS LAKE

Striped Bass

April 1–October 31: 2 per day, 15 inch minimum length limit

November 1–March 31: 1 per day, 36 inch minimum length limit

WATTS BAR

Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass:

April 1–October 31: 2 per day in combination

November 1–March 31: 2 per day in combination, only one may be a striped bass.

Striped Bass:

April 1–October 31: 15 inch minimum length limit.

November 1–March 31: 36 inch minimum length limit

Hybrid Striped Bass:

15 inch minimum length limit

MELTON HILL

Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass:

2 per day in combination, including Clinch River upstream to Highway 61 bridge in Clinton. 15 inch minimum length limit

Striped Bass:

32–42 inch PLR; only one fish may be over 42 inches

Outlook for current fishing 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 can be found at times in very shallow water. Live bait should be easy to catch in most of the warm coves. Casting and trolling with artificial lures may still be the most effective method.

NORRIS LAKE The best fishing should be found mid-lake from Hickory Star on the Clinch River and Springs Dock on the Powell River and upstream. Look for the gulls and the warmest water that is attracting bait fish. Artificial lures are still very effective but with some warmer water to be found on sunny days, live bait could also be pulled along the shallow, sun-warmed banks with planer boards.

WATTS BAR & MELTON HILL The steam plants at Kingston and Bull Run Creek will have the most predictable catches. This will depend largely on the contrast in water temperature in the Clinch River around the steam plants.

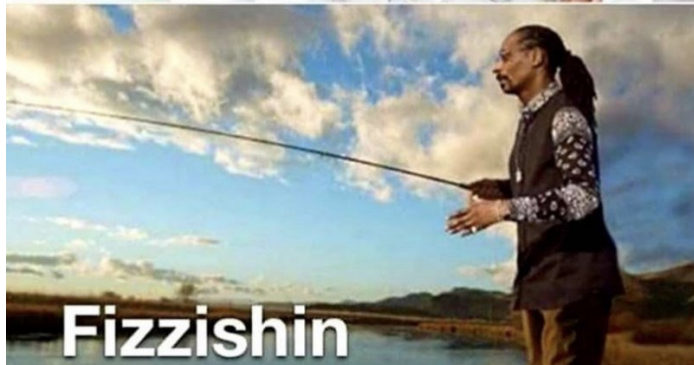
CAUTION & PLANNING are suggested during the winter months more than any other time of year. Top water action is common. Artificial and small lively bait do well in the coldest water of winter. Umbrella rigs have become very popular in winter & effective over the past several years. The bite can be fast and over quickly in the coldest part of winter. Catch & Release is very successful this time of year. The Gulls will be effective until the winter kill begins on the threadfins. The kill begins to take place normally around the last week of February.

A great way to find the right places to look for fish is from past history. Look at the last few years of information available on fishing websites, articles, pictures, and magazines. Many times the best clue is to find the largest baitfish concentrations that will seek out the warmest most stable temperatures with nutrient rich water that is normally murky. Fishing shows & preparing fishing equipment for spring are common winter time entertainment when the weather is just ugly.

— *Ezell Cox*



Greg Osterbrock with 2 Norris stripers.



YOUR 2021 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

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Vice President: Steve Nichols

Treasurer: Eric Rauch

Secretary: Keith Shannon

Board Chairman: Allan Franklin

TSBA DIRECTORS

Bill Ballou, Jim Blazier, Steve Nichols, Cory Malabey, James Pierce, Eric Rauch, Bob Biscay, Hal Basdekis

TSBA STAFF

Newsletter Printing: Jim Blazier, Bill Ballou

Distribution: Jim Blazier jblazier@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor: Beth Willis tsba.newsletter@gmail.com

Membership: Eric Rauch arthurmuchow@yahoo.com

Web Administrator: Bob Biscay tennstripedbass@gmail.com

Facebook Coordinator: Allan Franklin/Steve Nichols/Eric Rauch

Sponsor Coordinator: Justin Rose

Public Relations: Ezell Cox

No Need to Renew!

If you paid dues in 2020, your membership has been extended through 2021. New members can still join by completing the form in this newsletter and mailing it with their payment to the address below.

Enclose a check for \$20.00

Mail to: TSBA

P.O. Box 7303

Knoxville, TN 37921

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 adding or renewing for 2020. TSBA can provide newsletters for our sponsors to distribute. Thanks!



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As a member:

- * You'll receive a newsletter periodically.
- * 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, Inc. web page.

Is this a renewal ____ or a new membership ____

Your name _____ -- _____

Spouse's name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(____) _____

E-Mail address _____

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

* A copy of the Bylaws can be found on the TSBA, Inc. website at <http://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 7303

Knoxville, TN 37921

Memberships extended: Members who paid 2020 dues have no need to renew for this year. All current memberships have been extended through 2021 due to COVID. New members may still join by filling out the above form and submitting it with their payment.

Tennessee Striped Bass Association
P.O. Box 7303
Knoxville, TN 37921

Tennessee
Striped
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GET HOOKED!