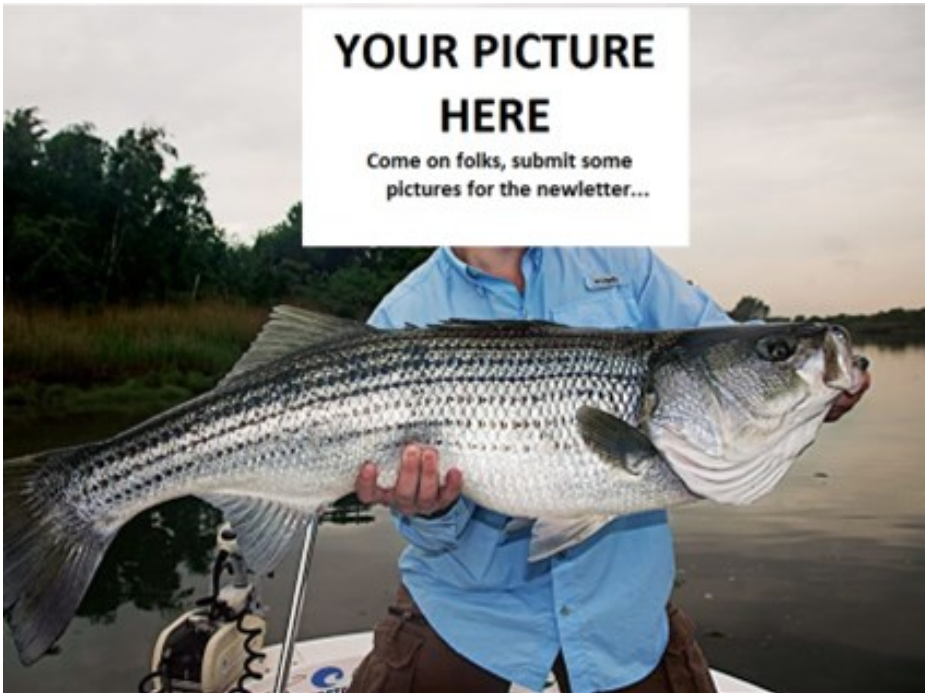


Tennessee Striped Bass Association

Get Hooked !



January/February 2024



**YOUR PICTURE
HERE**

Come on folks, submit some
pictures for the newsletter...

Send your pictures and news items to the email address below!

In-Person Bi-Monthly Meetings on first Thursdays
- at Shoney's on Emory Road in Powell

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](#)

December 2023 - Board of Directors Meeting

The TSBA Board of Directors met on December 7, 2023 at Shoney's on Emory Rd, Knoxville. The main purpose for the meeting was to set the stage for TSBA as we move forward into 2024. Several items were discussed including:

- **Meetings** will continue to be held bimonthly, on the 1st Thursday of the even months (Feb, April, etc.) at Shoney's on Emory Rd in Knoxville. Members and prospective members are encouraged to attend; dinner at 6pm followed by meeting at 7pm.
- **Membership Dues** – Although we have suspended renewal membership dues for the last three years, we have decided to reinstate the annual \$20 renewal fee for 2024. New members will be charged the normal \$20 membership fee.
- **Fish Fry** – We will plan to have a club fish fry, perhaps in June. This will be discussed more at the February meeting. . Our 1st location choice is Anderson County Park on Norris if the pavilion is available.
- **State of the Club** - As of date of this meeting, the club has funds on hand totalling \$6380.30. There are 127 paid members, 9 of whom were new in 2023, along with 15 “honor members”.
- **Paid Sponsors** - since the club is in great shape financially, we decided not to bother having paid sponsors.
- **Officers** will remain the same as in 2023: Keith Shannon, President; seeking candidate for Vice-President; Eric Rauch, Secretary/Treasurer. Volunteers for the vacant position should contact Keith Shannon (keith.shannon@gmail.com) or Allan Franklin (striperallan@aol.com).
- **Board of Directors:** Terms for Bill Ballou, Jim Blazier and Eric Rauch ended on Dec. 31, 2023. Jim and Eric will continue on the BOD for another three-year term and Jeff Cate was added to the BOD for the same term. Terms for Bob Biscay and Hal Basdekis run through December 2024. Steve Nichols has resigned from BOD for personal reasons; the club is seeking a member to complete his term which ends in December 2024. Terms for Allen Franklin (Board Chairman), James Pierce, and Scott Farmer will continue through December 2025.

Submitted by Eric Rauch, Secretary

February 2024 Club Meeting

The first meeting of the year will be held on Thursday, February 1st at Shoney's, 315 E. Emory Rd, Powell, TN 37849. Dinner and social hour begins at 6pm; meeting begins at 7pm. Come join your fellow club members for a fun and informative session!



On January 29th, TSBA members collected striped bass on Norris Lake for ORNLs annual contaminant sampling program.

Where to Find Stripers in Winter Months

Before delving into actual strategies, though, a few preliminary steps will help. First on the list, check with biologists and wardens to determine which lakes near you are best for stripers. Then talk to bait shop owners, guides, locals and boat launch workers about where on the lake the fish have been caught recently.

Most lakes stripers are found in are rather large, so it helps to get a heads up on where the fish have been congregating. No one is going to tell you an exact spot to fish, but narrowing things down to a general part of the lake or feeder arm of it gives you a good starting point. In some lakes the water near the dam is good during winter. In others the fish move far upstream into headwaters or in shallow coves searching for shad and other baitfish. Knowing the local preferences on the lake you choose is a big help.

Buy a topographic lake map and pencil in recommended spots. Then if they produce, you can mark them permanently with ink. The map is also valuable for showing you key potential winter striper hangouts such as bridges across feeder arms, river channel edges, the backs of feeder creeks, mud flats, submerged islands, deep points, and power plant discharge areas, if there are any. Pick the ramp closest to where you plan to fish, so you won't have a long cold boat ride in winter's frigid air. Also pre-rig several fishing rods at home, so you won't have to fool with that on the water and will have several good lures tied on or bait rigs already attached.

Using Live Bait

Live bait is one of the most reliable methods of all for catching winter stripers. Larger shad and skipjack herring can be used if big fish are present. However, when the water temperature is under 50, stripers will often refuse to take larger bait and downsizing to crappie minnows or small shad is required.

Two methods work with live bait. One is a technique similar to fishing a plastic worm for bass. Hook the baitfish through both lips from the bottom up on a size 2-2/0 bait hook. Add several split shot 12-18 inches up the line, or a barrel swivel and 1/4-3/8 ounce sliding egg sinker above it. Vary the weight according to the depth you're fishing and whether there is current, as well as how deep the stripers are holding.

You can fish this rig anywhere that you locate lots of baitfish and stripers, but bridge pilings on creek arms of the lake are especially hot spots. The current there tends to attract stripers in winter. It also works at all the other steeper spots described earlier such as points, drop-offs and thermal discharge areas. Cast out, allow the bait to reach bottom or come close to it, then begin slowly reeling it back. Raise the rod tip, then lower it back down to reel up slack. When a fish taps, give it a few seconds to take the bait, and then set up with a hard sweeping motion to drive the hook home.

The second method for fishing bait is to use shad or shiners fished directly over the top of a known steeper hangout or a school of fish you've located on the depth finder. You can either anchor or use an electric motor to stay on the spot. To rig up for this method, thread a 1/2 to 1 1/2 ounce egg sinker on the main line, then tie on a barrel swivel and 24- to 48-inch leader with a 2 to 2/0 hook. Impale the shad or minnow through both lips or lightly through the back. Sometimes it helps to chum while you're waiting for a bite. Cut up a few shad or shiners and drop them overboard. Also try different depth levels. After half an hour if the action is slow, move to a new spot.

At times cut bait will produce even better than live bait. Try a cut piece of shad or several dead shiners on a hook. This is particularly effective in shallower areas such as long, gradually tapering points, mud flats and humps. The scent of the dead fish can attract stripers from long distances.

Follow the Birds

Following the birds is another good way to take winter stripers. Watch for gulls swooping down or choppy, broken water where fish are feeding explosively on shad near the surface, then get to them quickly. It helps to keep a pair of binoculars on the boat to scan for feeding birds. Stay a short distance back and ease up slowly with the trolling motor. Then cast either elongated surface poppers or soft-plastic shad lures towards the breaking fish. Try to match the size of the quarry, which could be anywhere from 3-7 inches.

Work the plugs with a jerky, twitching retrieve and occasional pauses. Reel the soft shad imitations with a smooth retrieve, trying different depths. Start near the surface, then probe levels as deep as 10-15 feet where bigger fish may be lurking.

-Adapted from BassPro Shops One Source

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*



David Mullins with a nice striper!



YOUR 2024 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

President: Keith Shannon

Vice President: *Seeking candidate*

Treasurer: Eric Rauch

Secretary: Keith Shannon

Board Chairman: Allan Franklin

TSBA DIRECTORS

Jeff Cate, Jim Blazier, Scott Farmer, James Pierce, Eric Rauch, Bob Biscay, Hal Basdekis

TSBA STAFF

Newsletter Printing: Jim Blazier

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

Membership: Eric Rauch erauch01@gmail.com

Web Administrator: Bob Biscay tennstripedbass@gmail.com

Facebook Coordinator: Allan Franklin/Steve Nichols/Eric Rauch

Public Relations: Ezell Cox

Time to Renew!

Annual membership renewal dues are \$20. New members can also 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

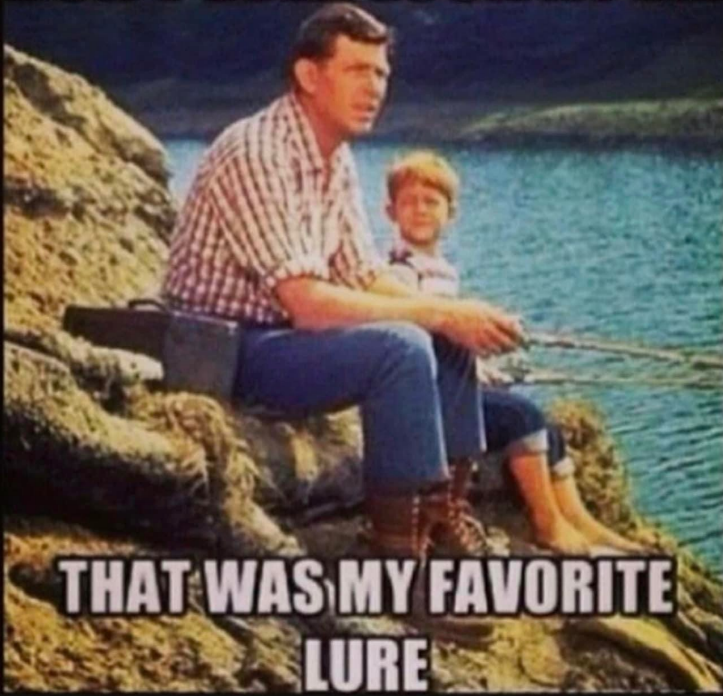
Knoxville, TN 37921

**WHEN PEOPLE SEE MY
FISHING GEAR AND THINK I'M RICH**



BRO, I'M JUST IRRESPONSIBLE

DON'T EVEN LOOK AT ME



**THAT WAS MY FAVORITE
LURE**

T.S.B.A., Inc. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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 bi-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 renewals due: Annual renewal fees are \$20; please fill out the above form and mail in with your check. New members may also join by filling out the above form and submitting it with their payment of \$20.

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

Tennessee

Striped

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Association

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