

# Tennessee Striped Bass Association

Get Hooked !



September/October 2022



Maddox Asher with a smallmouth bass!

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](mailto:tsba.newsletter@gmail.com)

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## October 2022 - No Club Meeting

There will be no regular club meeting for October. We typically hold the club fish fry in lieu of the October meeting, and even though the fish fry has been postponed there are no plans to get together.

## Annual Club Fish Fry Rescheduled

The annual club fish fry that had been scheduled for Saturday, October 1st at Anderson County Park has been postponed to Spring 2023. The spring date will be set and announced soon, and we hope to see everyone there!



Not a striper, but wow! This recent catch (and release) from the Cumberland River set a new state record at 117 pounds.



Sydney Asher with a nice striper!

# Fall and Early Winter Techniques for Striped Bass

East Tennessee is fortunate to have several lakes with good striped bass fishing. This article summarizes my experiences on Watts Bar in the late fall and early winter. I really enjoy fishing this time of year. After a scorching summer of sweating through my clothes, the cool weather is a welcome relief. The crowds of fishermen and pleasure boaters are gone, watchable wildlife is abundant, and fishing is good.

## When

In the summer and early fall, when the water temperature is in the mid-70s or higher, most striped bass are enjoying the cooler water in the Tennessee and Clinch River arms of the lake. As the water temperature cools and fall progresses, fish leave the river arms and return to the main lake to feed heavily. By the end of October, huge schools of shad move to the back of mid and lower lake feeder creeks and large coves. Shortly thereafter, flocks of seagulls show up to eat the shad and, fortunately for us, show us where the striped bass are.

## Where

Your best bet to find striped bass is to find seagulls. When striped bass feed, they push shad to the surface, making them easy prey for seagulls. Seek out creeks and coves that consistently have large numbers of gulls. A pair of binoculars helps. Unlike you and I, gulls fish all day every day. They know which creeks are frequented by feeding striped bass and spend most of their time there. They are essentially playing the odds, in gamblers' parlance. Every morning and evening, striped bass and gulls have feeding frenzies on Watts Bar. However, the frenzies don't occur in the same place every day. If you don't see fish breaking and birds diving shortly after sunrise or within an hour or so of sunset, move. You are in the wrong spot. If fish don't break by a certain time known only to the birds, they will leave a particular creek to find breaking fish. You should too.

## How

Shad on freelines, planer boards and down lines will all catch fish in late fall and early winter. In the early morning and late afternoon, when fish typically come up near the surface to feed, planer boards and freelines are most effective. When the sun is high, and especially so on sunny days, downlines work best. Watch your graph and note the depth at which you see fish and rig your rods accordingly. I always keep two rods rigged with artificial baits to target breaking fish. One is rigged with a topwater bait like a popper or wakebait, the other with a swimbait or similar soft plastic.

Striped bass can be very size-selective as the water gets colder. When striped bass are feeding on tiny baits, they will often not take larger baits. The solution is to downsize your bait and tackle. When the water is in the high 40s, a three-inch shad on ten-pound line and a #4 hook is often required to get bites. Don't overlook tiny artificials in cold water. They will frequently outfish live bait. In cold water, striped bass' strike zones get very small. Live bait is smart. It stays out of the strike zone. Artificial baits are dumb. Tiny artificials will generate a reaction bite when it gets in the strike zone.

*Keith Shannon*



# 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 seasonal migration away from the thermal trap that the larger fish have been surviving in during the late summer months has begun as the lake turnover & mixing is underway. The water quality remained good enough this summer for great survival of the larger stripers. Good dissolved oxygen & temperatures can be found anywhere so the striper/hybrid will head for the most abundant bait. Catch and Release will be possible (and desirable). Top water activity can be noticed on the calm mornings. The largest concentration of bait happens in the upper end of the reservoir and the back of major coves & creeks. The gulls will start to arrive by the end of October & other bait-eating birds will help find the game fish until then.

## **Norris Lake**

Water quality remained great all summer, so survival was excellent. Lake turnover & mixing is well underway, so migration of the stripers from deep water around the lower portion (dam end) of the lake has begun. Bait can be seen on the surface along with breaking game fish feeding in it. Stripers can be found around the most abundant bait in the headwaters of major creeks, coves, and rivers. Good Catch and Release practice now becomes optional. The gulls are expected back to help find the fish at the same time the size and creel limits change on November 1.

## **Watts Bar & Melton Hill**

Look for the stripers in front of the major coves or where you find the most bait fish and bait-eating birds. Catch and Release works good in the cool water months. The fish in Watts Bar and lower Clinch Watts Bar have contamination warnings so should not be harvested.

— Ezell Cox

# WHEN THEY FORGET TO BLUR THE BACKGROUND IN THEIR FISHING PICS



Right: David Mullins with a  
baby striper





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**No Need to Renew!**

**If you paid dues in 2020 or 2021, your membership has been extended through 2022. 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**

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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 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 \_\_\_

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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 or 2021 dues have no need to renew for this year. All current memberships have been extended through 2022 due to COVID uncertainties. 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

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