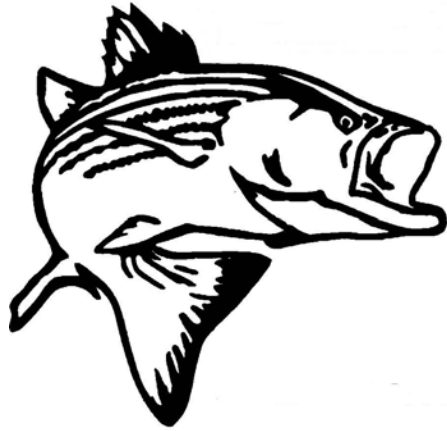


**Catch
the
Striper
Fever!**

T.S.B.A.



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

**July
2012**



Ezell Cox has had many a pole-bending experience during his years of pursuing the striped bass. In our feature article, he graciously shares his expertise with club members on the art and science of keeping the "live" in live bait.

Letter from the Prez

I hope everyone had a great 4th of July; it is one of my favorite holidays.

Our new meeting site at the Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, TN had a great turnout for last month's meeting. We had almost 50 folks attend with several new members joining our club. After a great meal downstairs in Uncle Buck's restaurant, we



Ezell was our first guest speaker in the new meeting location at Bass Pro Shops. This meeting space has several features lacking at the previous location. Be sure to come enjoy this new meeting space and dinner menu with us next month.

convened our meeting in the conference room on the 2nd floor. We had plenty of room in our new meeting space and the speakers were close enough to be heard by all. Trey Taylor, president of the Boone area striper club, attended our meeting along with TWRA Commissioner Dr. Jeff McMillin. Based on input from those present at the meeting, I believe TSBA has found a compatible new home for our monthly meetings.

A new concept for sharing our meeting was introduced this month: video recording the event and posting it on YouTube. Several of our out-of-town members had suggested an audio recording of the event, but we stepped it up and tried the video. The last count of viewings was around 100, an impressive number. We plan to create a TSBA YouTube account where several of our past videos and all future meetings will be posted for members to enjoy.

See page 12 for a link to the video recording of the June 2012 meeting. I'd like to extend a special "thank you" to Jay Girardot and Roy Hawk for their help on recording and posting the video.

On a serious note, East Tennessee has been experiencing above average heat and low flows through our dams. Our lakes and rivers have increased in temperatures earlier than normal. I not only have seen floating striped bass myself but also have heard from several others who have seen them as well. In most cases we believe they were released by anglers with good intentions. But summer stress has weakened the fish so that a long fight and short trip out of the water for a picture and a weighing will not allow a recovery. In surface water temps above 80 degrees we encourage catch, keep your limit, and quit. Unfortunately Catch, Pic and Release will hurt the fish more than help them under these extreme heat conditions.

As always the best way to enjoy our Stripers is to Go Fishing and fish responsibly.

— Doug Steffe

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Minutes of the June meeting

TSBA's monthly meeting was held at Bass Pro Shops in Sevierville on June 18, 2012. Approximately 45 members attended the meeting. President Doug Steffe opened the meeting by introducing new members and the evening's speaker, Ezell Cox. Ezell's discussion topic was about how to catch and keep live bait. He described cast nets, locations and tactics for catching bait and how to keep bait frisky in a bait tank. Ezell's advice on how to manage live bait was a treasure of information. Please see the article on page 6 that describes his presentation in detail.

Next, Allan Franklin announced that the Striper Bowl will be held on Cherokee Lake on June 23. The results of that tournament can be found on page 12.

After a brief break, TWRA Commissioner Dr. Jeff McMillin informed the crowd that the Commission will be reinstated as the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission in July. He urged TSBA members to contact him with any concerns they have. Next, tackle co-op manager Steve Nichols said he would have many new items for sale at the next meeting.



Surprise guest speaker, TWRA Commissioner Jeff McMillin, says he greatly values input from TSBA members. He is looking forward to attending future meetings and getting to know club members and our concerns over the next four years of his term.

Finally, Doug opened a discussion about the abuse of the striped bass fishery by out of state guide services and their clients. Doug discussed strategies to address this problem, including better signs to educate anglers about the dangers of consuming fish from certain lakes.

— **Keith Shannon, Secretary**

June Meeting

Please join us on July 16, 2012 for the TSBA monthly meeting. Our guest speaker will be Mike Smith of Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery. We will meet at our new location for dinner and the meeting:

**Bass Pro Shops (Kodak/Sevierville)
3629 Outdoor Sportsmans Place,
Kodak, TN**

Bass Pro Shops is located at Exit 407 on Interstate 40. We will have dinner at 6 p.m. in the restaurant located inside the store. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in a conference room on the second floor.

August Expectations

Expect to find the thermocline developed and getting deeper in the stratified calm waters with 80 + degrees on the surface. Striped bass are temperate bass and they will be seeking out the deeper, cooler temperatures. Water quality reports sometimes become available by Region 4 TWRA biologists on Norris and Cherokee Reservoirs in July and are worth looking at to locate areas with suitable temperature and dissolved oxygen at depth.

The gizzard and threadfin shad will seek out the warmest water they can find; the striper will follow them to feed then return to their thermal refuge quickly. The alewife is also a temperate species and will seek out deeper cooler water, making a fish finder your best bet for finding them. The striper and bait-eating birds will be where the bait is most abundant.

Artificial baits can be very productive this time of year. You may want to try jigging or trolling. Umbrella rigs have become a favorite method the last several years. Be safe and aware of the extra activity on the lakes as the other large boats with skiers, wake boarder, and swimmers have also come out to play. Large live bait is working well again and normally easy to catch this time of year. Catch and release may become questionable in some places this month. Please don't kill a fish that is not part of your harvest limit in the hot summer months.

— **Ezell Cox**

Catching and keeping live bait

Ezell Cox gave a presentation on catching and keeping live bait at the June meeting. This is a topic that never grows old with TSBA members: this subject is of great interest to novice anglers trying to hone their craft as a striper fisherman while long-time anglers often find there is something new for them to learn as well. Ezell's informative presentation was timely as Tennessee anglers face record-breaking high temperatures this summer. You'll certainly need to equip yourself with a few strategies for keeping bait alive in the record breaking high temperatures we are experiencing in 2012.

Most all Tennessee rivers and reservoirs have abundant numbers of bait fish. The species targeted most frequently by striper fisherman are in the herring family (*genus Clupeid*). Examples of fish in this group include gizzard shad, threadfin shad, alewife, skipjack and moon eye.

Gizzard and threadfin shad

Gizzard and threadfin shad can often be found in warm, shallow water at the back of calm coves and creeks. They prefer stained water because it has an abundance of microscopic organisms like algae and plankton, which is their food source. All of the rivers that feed the tributary reservoirs, the reservoirs, and the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers have an abundance of these shad, where they can be caught legally with cast nets. Cast nets must be no more than 10 feet in radius with a mesh size no smaller than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, and no larger than 1 inch on the square. The most common nets used are ones with a 6 to 8 foot radius and a mesh size of $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ inch. Additional regulations on cast net uses may apply in some places and different times of the year. The preferred size for bait is 3 to 5 inches for the threadfin and up to 10 inches maximum length for the gizzard shad. These are the easiest to catch in shallow water by sneaking quietly in range with the cast net. Herons and other fish-eating birds are another clue that these bait fish are present and may require throwing the net blindly. The reason these two species make such excellent live bait is that they are extremely active and fast. Unfortunately, this characteristic makes them hard to close a cast net around in order to fill your bait tank!

Alewife

Capturing alewife requires a different strategy than the shad because these fish prefer cooler water and therefore remain at great depths during the warmer months. They are also much slimmer in build. You'll need a heavy, small mesh size (3/8 or 1/4 inch) in order to capture them without having them get stuck in the net. The preferred size for alewife used as bait is 3 inch minimum to a maximum length of around 10 inches. The reason these fish are so good at catching all game fish is that they are extremely active and fast. Again, this makes them hard to close a cast net around. Alewife are most commonly caught under lights at night. A favorite tactic used by experienced fishermen is to leave the lights on to attract the alewife and just before casting the net, turn off the light to disorient them. After each cast, let everything return to normal under the light for another cast. Alewife can also be caught during the spawn at night near the bank.

Skipjack

The skipjack herring is the live bait of choice for the trophy-hunting striper fishermen. Skipjacks are more common in tailrace systems, where the adults become predators feeding primarily on fish and insects. Catching them is the most challenging of all the members in the herring family. This species is most frequently caught on a rod and reel. To catch them, cast into a school of breaking jacks, letting your rig sink a little before retrieving quickly with a jerking motion. Lures to use include small flies, sabiki rigs, and spoons.

Skipjack are hard to keep alive, even for the most experienced fisherman. Special skills and experience are needed to keep these fish alive long enough to use successfully. Your bait tank must hold a large volume of water. It is also necessary to maintain high levels of dissolved oxygen in the holding water. Techniques anglers use to keep these fish alive include injecting pure oxygen into the holding water, treating holding water with a therapeutic dosage of salt, sedation, and cooling the temperature of the holding water.

Keeping baitfish alive

The best live bait is the type you can catch and put on the hook as quickly as possible. With that being said, there are many techniques and types of equipment available to help you in your efforts to keep bait alive for the next fishing trip. Where and when you

catch your live bait does make a difference in how good it is, and how well it will keep in captivity until you feed it to the stripers. Baitfish caught in cooler water are going to survive longer and catch fish better than baitfish caught in warm water. This is especially true after long-term warm water stress has begun. **The temperature of your holding water is a critical factor in keeping live bait healthy.** This is due primarily to the fact that cooler water holds a high concentration of dissolved oxygen. Fish also have slower metabolic rates in cooler water, which allows them to cope better with the stress of captivity. This is the reason you can stock more bait per gallon in a tank of relatively cooler water. Remember - it is extremely stressful for freshwater fish to experience temperature fluctuations in excess of 7 to 10 degrees from where they were captured.

Bait tanks have to be capable of allowing for an adequate exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide between the holding water and the air. This is accomplished by creating as much water surface area as possible, which will naturally allow for carbon dioxide produced by the fish to escape the water while oxygen from the air enters the water. You can take things a step further and greatly enhance the exchange of gases by breaking the surface tension of the water with a battery operated air stone. You could also use a small submersible water pump that re-circulates tank water to help break the water surface tension as a means to improve the natural exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your holding water. Filtration is another important component of keeping fish in captivity. This can easily be accomplished by pumping the holding water through filter material at a rate of four water changes per hour or more. Filtration is important because it removes the build up of metabolic waste (ammonia) from the tank water. If ammonia levels build up too high, it will essentially "burn" the gills on the fish, impairing gill function. A slow circular motion of the water in the bait tank is also desirable.

The holding water in your tank can be treated with chemicals to improve the survival rate of your bait fish. The most common additive is just plain non-iodized salt at about one cup per 20 gallons of water. The number of bait fish in the tank is always a question asked that is hard to answer without knowing all the conditions and cir-

cumstances listed above. My best answer is to always stay within a safe measure to prevent stress. Small quantities of good bait that will catch fish are better than any larger number of bait that won't. The number of bait the tank will keep in good condition depends on the size of bait. If all the conditions in the tank are favorable, the shad per gallon could go as high as ¼ pound (approximately a 7 inch gizzard shad) per gallon of water. When bait is occasionally easy to catch, there is a great temptation to overload your holding tank. It is very hard for the angler to resist this temptation, so go ahead: overload the tank and learn this lesson once and for all.

The best live bait fishermen enjoy the art and science of catching and keeping of bait fish, because this is what makes them successful at catching striper and hybrid. The learning curve can only be accomplished with experience and shortened a small amount by talking to someone else that has already "been there and done that."

— **Ezell Cox**

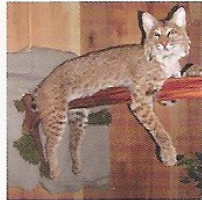


TSBA extends a hearty congratulations to Preston Baker, who landed his very first striper this past month on Norris Lake. Preston, age 9, was fishing with Janine Johnson, who has served as a TSBA officer in past years.



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Outlook for current fishing spots

CHEROKEE LAKE

The striped bass and alewife will be seeking refuge in cooler water as the lake warms up into the high 80's. This will cause them to move downstream from the headwaters and out of the warmer shallow coves. Looking for the large concentrations of baitfish and bait-eating birds is still a good way to find stripers/hybrids, but breaking fish on the surface will slow with only a few showing up early in the morning. Locating schools of fish on the fish finder will allow for some jigging of lures and spoons. Large schools can often be found on the fish finders, allowing jigging to work well on the main channel points and humps near the dam area. The premium locations are normally downstream of the German Creek area all the way to the dam. Hybrids can still be targeted in the deep creek channels like Mossy and Panther creeks and around all the islands near the dam. The larger stripers can be stressed with the warm water and low dissolved oxygen, making it difficult to release these fish successfully. **REMEMBER: THE NO FISHING ZONE STARTS JULY 15 IN FRONT OF THE DAM.**

NORRIS LAKE

Finding large schools of baitfish or looking for surface feeding fish in the early hours of daylight can still be effective, but the best tool will be the fish finder as they start to go deeper in the water column to find a thermal refuge. The largest concentrations of striper will be in the downstream half of the reservoir, still in some of the major deep coves like Cove and Big Creeks, but near deep water main channel humps. The bait-eating birds are scarce on Norris, so using them to locate fish is not as helpful as on other lakes. Baitfish and striped bass will be much easier to locate on the fish finder as they move away from the banks and out of the coves. Good catch and release practice on some of the smaller fish may still be successful by removing the hook quickly while still in the water with no weight or pictures. Caution should be used with a harvest and quit plan.

WATTS BAR & MELTON HILL

The striped bass bite in the tail waters and downstream river will develop this month and only get better as the flow at the dams increases and the water cools some. The release schedule plays a major role in the quality of fishing below the dams and it seems to be much better with flow. Top water bites can happen all summer in the tail waters and downstream. Release schedules can be looked up on the TVA web site to improve your catch rate. The baitfish are in the shallow, sun-warmed flats and coves. Watch for herons hunting baitfish in these areas to locate stripers throughout most of the summer. Limited handling of the fish can improve the survival of released fish. The fish in Watts Bar & lower Clinch have contamination warnings so should not be harvested.

— **Ezell Cox**

2012 Striper Bowl Tournament



Pictured above are the participants in the 2012 Striper Bowl Tournament. The group earned \$206 for the club. The money is slated to help TSBA fund outreach programs aimed at helping disadvantaged children and wounded veterans experience the fun of striper fishing.

The Striper Bowl is one of the great traditions of the club, so please consider joining us next year. Ron Gabler, who took second place in the tournament, says "please convey to all involved my appreciation for the quality professional sportsmanship with our tournament. I've been savoring this experience all week. Thank you!"

Be sure to visit our website
www.TNStripedBass.com

(log in with your real name and unique password to register)

Find us on YouTube!

[June 2012 TSBA meeting](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBHS-67HEVI&feature=youtu.be)

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBHS-67HEVI&feature=youtu.be>)



*The tournament winners
placed as follows:*

***First Place
Jennifer Davis***

***63 5/8 inches
Cash prize of \$86.00***



***Second Place
Ron Gabler***

***63 1/2 inches
Cash Prize of \$52.00***



***Third Place
Jay Girardot***

***61 inches
Cash Prize of \$34.00***

Trophy shots



Jay Girardot submitted the trophy shots on the following pages for us to enjoy. Jay operates a fishing guide service based out of Norris Lake.



Trophy shots



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2012 TSBA Calendar

Please join us at TSBA meetings and events. Monthly meetings are held the ***Bass Pro Shops (Kodak/Sevierville), 3629 Outdoor Sportsmans Place, Kodak, TN.***

- Jul 16 Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, Tennessee
Speaker: Mike Smith, Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery
- Aug 20 Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, Tennessee
Topic: River Fishing and Summer Lake Fishing
- Sep 17 Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, Tennessee
Topic: Rigging your boat for stripe fishing - Led by D. Steffe
- Oct 6 Annual fish fry - No monthly meeting
- Nov 19 Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:00 p.m., meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bass Pro Shops in Kodak, Tennessee
Topic: Striper tackle
- Dec There is no monthly meeting in December



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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**



**July 16, 2012: Monthly Meeting
Bass Pro Shops
3629 Outdoor Sportsmans Place
Kodak, TN
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.; meeting at 7:00 p.m.**