

Guest Editorial...



Sam Houston

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

KATHERINE HARDIN, SAM HOUSTON EC BOARD DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 4

One of our top priorities at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative is to make sure we are constantly listening to you, our member-owners. Working for a member-owned company makes our job great, because we have only one, simple business rule—what’s good for our members is good for us. And that helps us respond better to your needs.

Because we’re a local company, we’re close enough and small enough to notice our members’ needs, from residential customers to business owners large and small.

As a Sam Houston Electric Co-op member, you can always stop by any of our three local branch offices and talk to someone you know about any part of your electric service. On the contrary, customers of many utilities are forced to do business long distance, talking to service representatives headquartered hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles away who don’t know them, their families or even their communities. When you call Sam Houston EC, you’ll speak to someone close by who most likely will know you personally, or at

the very least will know your community and what’s happening in it.

Consider how often we interact in our daily lives. At first glance, it may seem that there is little connection between school kids waiting for their bus and the line crew

in a Sam Houston EC service truck. But look again: those line crews working on utility poles probably have kids waiting for their school bus alongside yours. We’re connected to our members—our neighbors—by much more than just power lines.

And because we’re connected, we take a special interest in our members. We do everything we can to help improve the quality of life of the people we serve. Whether it’s an energy audit to evaluate the insulation in your home and how effectively your appliances are working, or providing information on how to stay safe around electricity, Sam Houston Electric is committed to

providing you, our members, with an exceptional level of service which can only be offered by a local company that cares about the communities it serves.



Customer Care In Your Own Backyard



Contributing to the community.

Sam Houston Electric's goals are far more than dependable electric service. Serving the community is just as much a part of who we are and what we do as the kilowatts we deliver. From funding scholarships to support for local volunteer fire departments, we do as much as we can to contribute to the communities we serve.

“ I was thrilled to get the scholarship! It's nice that the Cooperative supports and promotes education. Scholarships have made a huge difference for me. They've allowed me to focus 100 percent on earning my degree.

I'm at Sam Houston State University studying agriculture and business. I'm working on completing my degree in 3-1/2 years. Then, I plan to pursue a graduate degree. My minor is management information systems.... I think it would be cool to go into something with computers and incorporate it with my agriculture background.”

*Adam Jenke, 2001 Valedictorian, Coldspring High School
4.0 GPA student, Sam Houston State University*



Energizing Communities Since 1939

ReMember This



Your Energy Dollars May Be Slipping Out Unnoticed

Heated air escapes from your nice, warm home during the winter through the same routes cold air finds its way in: through windows and doors. Air leaks are a waste of energy and money, and they can occur around windows and frames and even right through the glass.

Take a quick test to find leaks.

On a windy day, light a stick of incense and hold it next to a window. If the smoke travels horizontally, you have a leak. Use the same test to find leaks around doors, plumbing fixtures, electrical outlets and other potential escape routes for heated air.

Seal leaks with caulk and weather stripping.

Caulk is an airtight filler for cracks and holes. Weather stripping takes the form of a narrow piece of foam, metal, vinyl or rubber that seals window joints between the sash and frame but doesn't interfere with opening and closing the window. Either material can make a huge difference in keeping cold air out and warm air in your home.

Need help identifying energy wasters in your home?

Sam Houston EC's Energy Audit Service is designed to give Co-op members a better understanding of how your energy dollars are spent and to pinpoint ways to reduce energy usage and save money.

When you request an energy audit, a Sam Houston Electric Cooperative representative will personally visit your home to discuss your energy usage patterns, inspect your home for energy inefficiencies and recommend ways to improve energy efficiency. To learn more about the energy audit service or to schedule an appointment, call a Sam Houston EC Member Services Representative at 1-800-458-0381. Better service is our commitment to you, our member-owners.

SAFETY MATTERS

A Little Prevention Can Keep Little Ones Safe From Electric Shock

If you're a parent, you know that electrical outlets, cords and light bulb sockets are a source of endless fascination for small children. Tiny tots think those tiny slots in an outlet were designed for them to put their fingers in. And a wayward cord just begs to be pulled.

Remove temptation with a few inexpensive and simple steps.

- Install outlet covers to keep children's fingers out of outlets. Some covers totally block unused outlets; others allow you to use the outlet but make it impossible for a child to insert fingers, pencils, pennies or anything else.
- Secure loose electrical cords to prevent babies—or pets, for that matter—from chewing on, playing with or pulling on them. By using a cord shortener to secure loose lengths, taping down cords or tucking them away behind heavy furniture, you can avoid the risk of your child pulling down a lamp or choking on the cord.
- Unplug and put away electric items such as fans, irons or space heaters when not in use. In the kitchen, make certain cords of small appliances like toasters or coffee makers aren't within reach.

Do you have questions about electric safety in your home? Call a Sam Houston EC Member Services Representative at 1-800-458-0381. We're always glad to help.



ANOTHER DAY



Photo courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife, © 2002, Frank Aguilar



Think all Texas fish come from n

Without the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, one of the state's most sought after species of striped and hybrid bass in Texas get their start.

Contrary to what freshwater sport fishing enthusiasts across Texas might think, they're Yankees. Roger McCabe, Inland Fisheries Regional Program Director, says striped bass spawn in freshwater, and it's been along the east coast for hundreds of years. "They complete their life cycle in freshwater, and in the 1960's a lot of states started stocking them."

Striped bass are the largest member of the sea bass family. They are characterized by a white belly, with seven or eight uninterrupted horizontal stripes on each side. Both varieties travel in schools and thrive best in brackish water. In Texas, about 12 pounds, trophies in excess of 50 pounds have been landed. In Arlington, Texas, who caught a 53-pounder from the Brazos River in 1998. "It was a harder. "They're a real deep-bodied, strong fish," he said. "When you get a trophy like that, it's a real hard day's work."

Y IN PARADISE



The Striped Bass

nearby waterways? Think again.



Department's Resource Enhancement Program, of sport fish would be gone. Fact is, nearly all at one of the state's eight fish hatcheries.

might think, striped and hybrid bass are not natives to our state—director with Texas Parks and Wildlife says, "It's a saltwater fish that of years. Around 1954, biologists discovered that these fish could s started incorporating striped bass in their stocking programs." e silver in color, shading to olive-green on the back and white on the e of the body. Hybrids are produced by fertilizing a striper female with ig, open lakes with suitable forage. While an average striper weighs n fact, the current striped bass record is held by Ron Venerable of 999. McCabe says people like fishing for stripers because they fight et a hybrid or a striper on your line, it's a lot of fun."

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A Natural Fit

With an abundance of sport fish such as large mouth bass, channel catfish and crappie in Texas lakes and rivers, why develop an enhancement program to stock reservoirs with striped bass? McCabe says the purpose is two-fold. "One, the striped bass provide a trophy aspect of fishing that a lot of people really enjoy. We knew they could survive entirely in freshwater, and we also knew that they're excellent predators on the gizzard shad population, a nongame species very abundant in Texas. The available food supply, together with the trophy appeal of the fish, really filled a niche that was not being taken up by any other native species."



Although habitat and resources are ideal for striped bass subsistence in Texas, reproduction is more of a challenge. Naturally occurring stripers live in the ocean and swim upstream in rivers to spawn in freshwater. Because the majority of large reservoirs in Texas are man-made with dams, the striped bass are unable to swim far enough to make that river run productive. To maintain adequate levels of the species in the state's reservoirs, the fish must be spawned artificially and raised in hatcheries each year.

To Catch a Fish

The hatcheries are where the Trinity River Authority and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) come in. Joe Warren, TPWD Hatchery Program Director, says the reproduction process takes about three months from start to finish. "The



reproduction cycle begins in April, when the females begin to mature and the fish move up the Trinity River," he explained. "There's a huge population in Lake Livingston, and since their instinct is to swim upstream, they congregate at the tailrace spillway right below the dam. So we send our crews in there to collect them."

Trinity River Authority (TRA) assists TPWD crews with access to the staging area. Bill Holder, Project Manager – Lake Livingston Project, explained. "We allow them to stage in a restricted shore area along the river channel. It's just sand and mud and dirt, and there's no boat ramp access. They back their boat and stocking trailers into the water; but most times can't get out," he said. "We use small bulldozers and tractors to make sure that once they get those trailers loaded, they can get them out."

About 200 fish are procured each April during this two-day process. Roger McCabe says TPWD couldn't do it without the TRA's help. "They've been excellent cooperators in this whole program," he said. "They really deserve a lot of credit."

feed on natural food. After 30 to 45 days, the fry develop into fingerlings measuring about 1-1/2 inches, when they are ready to be harvested and stocked in various reservoirs around the state. Over 9 million striped and hybrid bass were stocked last June in Texas reservoirs.

Surprise Attack

And so goes the breeding process. Simple enough, but what otherwise runs as a well-oiled machine hit a speed bump in 2001 when golden algae wiped out the entire striper and hybrid population at the Dundee Hatchery. "Golden algae produces a toxin that gets on the gills and causes all kinds of disruption with the oxygen flow," Warren explained. "Israel has been battling this critter for 50 years."

To find a "cure" for the pesky and potentially disastrous organism, TPWD assigned a task force, who developed a technique whereby ammonium sulfate is introduced into hatchery ponds at a predetermined level. "The tricky thing is, the concentration has to be in the kill range for the golden algae, but

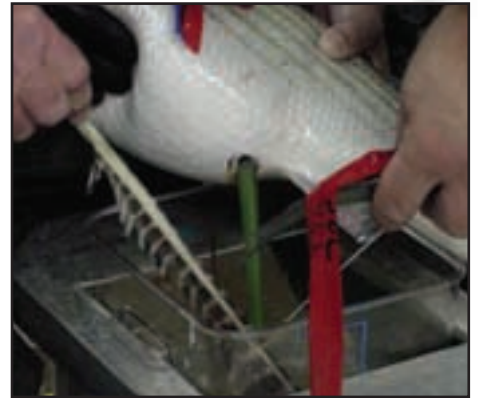


Photo courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife, © 2002, Jim Whitcomb

not high enough to kill the fish," he said. Fortunately, the treatment method has been very successful and golden algae has been under control since the 2001 outbreak. In fact, the task force was recognized by TPWD with an achievement award last fall.

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Texas anglers know that the Lone Star state is one of the premier fishing states in the country. With over 370 miles of coast, 212 major reservoirs and over 191,000 miles of rivers and streams, Texas is blessed with a wealth of fishing opportunities. Our freshwaters and mixed fresh and saltwater estuaries support 248 different species of fish.

A Fry is Born

Once collected, the stripers are tagged and shipped to two hatcheries; the Dundee Hatchery near Wichita Falls and Possum Kingdom Hatchery in Graford, Texas. Together the two facilities can incubate about 80 million eggs. Tissue samples are sent to a lab in San Marcos to verify that each fish is either a male or female striped bass or a male white bass (for hybrid breeding purposes).

To speed up the development of the females' ovaries, biologists inject them with a hormone called HCG (Human Chorionic Gonadotrophin). After approximately 36 hours, the eggs are extracted from the females and fertilized by two males to ensure success and provide genetic variability.

The fertilized eggs are incubated for about two days, and then they hatch out to what is referred to as a "sac fry." In the next three to five days, their swim bladders inflate, allowing them to swim upright, and their mouthparts develop.

When the fry are ready, they are transferred to fertilized ponds and begin to



Little Details Mean Big Results

As you can see, there's a lot that goes into an angler's catch of the day. From research and analysis to determine proper stocking levels, to raising striped bass entirely from artificial propagation, the folks at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Trinity River Authority are

dedicated to providing the ultimate striped and hybrid bass sport fishing experience to Texas anglers. So the next time you cast your line in hopes of hooking a striped or hybrid bass, remember the people who make it possible – and who knows, maybe your catch will break that 53-pound record!



Want to learn more about Texas marine life?



Take the kids on a roadtrip for a visit to either of the two state-of-the-art, multi-million dollar marine fish hatchery and aquariums in Texas.

Sea Center Texas

Located on 75 acres in Lake Jackson, Texas, Sea Center Texas visitor center houses graphic displays of the marine life of Texas bays and Gulf Waters. This showcase educational and entertainment facility includes an exceptional free aquarium, the largest red drum hatchery in the world and a wetland walkway and exhibit. Hatchery tours are by appointment only. For more information, call 979-292-0100 or e-mail patty.cardoza@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC)

Located four miles east of Athens, Texas, TFFC is an innovative aquatic nature center and hatchery complex focused on the broad range of freshwater plant and animal life living in Texas rivers and reservoirs. The 23,000 sq. ft. visitor center features a dive show auditorium, more than 300,000 gallons of aquariums, a fishing museum and a gift shop. Hatchery tours may be arranged by advanced notice. For more information, call 903-676-BASS or e-mail mickie.campbell@tpwd.state.tx.us.