

Lake Raystown Striped Bass Fishing

Written by FishingMOZ - Dave



Striped bass fishing in Pennsylvania is limited to a few locations with one of the more popular and least understood being Lake Raystown in Central PA. Raystown Lake is a large 28-mile long lake with water depths that reach over 100 feet.

Raystown Lake largely is undeveloped and is miles and miles of beautiful wooded shorelines, steep cliffs, and large flats. Sounds great huh? Well Lake Raystown is also one of the toughest lakes to locate fish on a consistent basis due to it's size and abundance of baitfish like gizzard shad, alewives, & other species of baitfish.

However that doesn't make it impossible to catch stripers and there are defiantly some monster in the lake.

Raystown is home to the current PA state record striped bass and many over 40lb fish are taken from the lake each year. The average striped bass caught in Lake Raystown average from 10 to 15lbs with some bigger ones threw in the mix every once in a while.

In this article we will examine the three different seasons being spring, summer and fall.

Each season will require a different area to target and different baits to use to locate and catch a trophy Lake Raystown striper.

One of the lakes great features is mile markers located on the shores of the Lake Raystown. These are large signs located every mile on the lake starting with mile marker 1 at the breast of the dam and going to mile marker 28 at weavers falls. In this article we will be referring to these mile markers to show how the stripers move from spring to fall.

Seasons Spring – April & May

Probably one of the easiest times of year to target striped bass in Raystown is during the early spring months. Striped bass in Lake Raystown attempt to spawn which means they run up the lake and into the sections of the lake that most look like a river. Many of these stripers will run all the way to Saxton in the spring, which is as far as they can go.

Fishing in Saxton is done from the shore and not from a boat and can be a great place to target striped bass in the early spring.

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If fishing from a boat you will want to target your efforts from mile marker 19 to 28 and focus on the points and flats. Striped bass will move to the points and flats in the spring to feed on baitfish that will be looking to these areas to spawn as well. In the spring the best choice of bait is to purchase live trout from one of the baitshops in the area. It is very difficult to catch gizzard shad or alewives in the spring and your time is best-spent fishing rather than searching for baitfish.

During the months of April and May one of the best presentations is slow trolling with your electric trolling motor pulling Redi-Rig floats and lightweight planner boards with live trout being from 15 feet down from the planner or float.

A common setup in the spring is two float behind the boat with ½ oz trolling sinkers 15 feet from the float and 2 planner boards to the side either with weight or free lined with no weight.

If free lining let out about 30 feet from the planner to allow the trout some room to move around.

Seasons Summer – June, July, August

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During the summer stripers in Lake Raystown move back down lake in the areas of Seven Points to the breast of the dam. The fish will actively feed at night moving up to structure in the bays, flats, & points feeding on alewives and gizzard shad. Fish ing at night during the summer can be done with lures searching the banks for feeding stripers or slow trolling live bait.

If fishing with live bait during the summer you will want to try to catch alewives or gizzard shad since this is what the fish are targeting the most.

If you plan to catch your own live bait with a cast net YOU WILL need a special license which can purchased from the states website.

Catching shad during the summer can be done searching the flats during the day or at night with a submersible green light.

Once you got your bait use basically the same setup as mentioned above in the spring sections. Some popular spots to fish during the summer months are Beer Barrel Bay, Seven Points Marina area, Marty's Island, Mile Marker 2 through 3, and the breast of the dam.

Seasons Fall – October

All fish feed in the fall heavily to prepare for the upcoming winter, and striped bass are no different. In the fall striped bass move to points, flats, and rocky shorelines to feed and can often be seen attacking baitfish on the surface. This is one of my favorite times to fish for stripers

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when they are actively feeding on baitfish.

My lure of choice is a Cotton Cordell Redfin or a Zoom Super Fluke fished with a 1 oz shad style jig head. If searching for fish on flats and points I will throw the Redfin, If I spot striped bass feeding on the top I will pickup the Super Fluke and cast to them allow my lure to be fished under the school of shad that are being busted up on.

What happens is the striped bass bust up on the shad then feed on the ones that become injured and fall below the school.

Stripers work in teams to feed much like other predators do.

Fish will blow up on the school often hitting them with their head or tail, which causes them to become injured and float under the school, which is an easy meal, another fish.

So fishing under the school represents an injured baitfish, which is often taken before a lure on the top.

Fall areas can be anywhere but I tend to focus my efforts towards the breast of the dam, many of the fish that are located at the breast of the dam are smaller but the little guys like to show their faces more than the big ones.

So that's Lake Raystown in a nutshell, it's big, it's tough, but it's not impossible. If you really want to be successful at Lake Raystown lookup many of the striped bass guides that are available for daily trips out on the lake.

These guys know there stuff and track the stripers in the moves up and down the lake and will always have a good supply of bait.

If you go to Raystown and get skunked on your first trip don't worry you're not a bad fisherman it's just a tough place and even the guides get skunked from time to time, but one of the great things about Raystown is the abundance of other fish that will actively take your bait including 5lb plus smallmouth & largemouth bass, musky, & even a walleye from time to time.

Good Luck and Tight Lines

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