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Sports

Page 11

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A pretty good St. Patrick's Day fishing trip

Yes, it was March 17. The preceding weekend was lousy, but the cold spell ended, and I was ready to do some fishing, as was my new neighbor next door, George Staller. He and his wife, Audrey, had recently moved here from New Mexico and wanted to learn about fishing for striped bass. He had been enjoying one of my favorite kinds of fishing, catching trout on dry flies in the clear streams of the Rocky Mountains.

The weather was nice during the first week of "spring break," and I hardly expected to find a striper guide with an opening during that very

Tom
Evans



Reflections of Outdoors

busy time. But wow, several of my friends on Lake Buchanan had open dates during that week. In fact, Jackie Headrick (Empty Pockets Fishing Guide Service) was able to take us the morning after I phoned him. George and

I met Jackie at Lake Point Resort a few minutes before sunrise, and we went north over the calm water, slick as glass.

Even though the weather had warmed up Sunday and Monday, it was **COLD** before sunrise as we headed toward our fishing spot. I was wearing my down-filled ski jacket, plenty warm for the slopes I had enjoyed during my 15 years in Colorado, but even that was not really enough. I turned my back forward and still I thought I would die of exposure. Fortunately, I didn't, but I was sure glad when we got

Evans ... see Page 10B



George Staller displays his first striped bass.

COURTESY PHO

Evans: Pretty good St. Patrick's Day

From Page 1B

there and the sun was on the horizon. George got pretty cool too.

Headrick knew exactly where to stop and begin fishing. We dropped our baited lines (eight of them) onto the lake bottom and placed the rods into holders. Then we reeled up a couple of feet to get our big 2-4-inch shad moving around where stripers would be attracted to them.

It wasn't long before my fishing partner had a fish on one of the lines near

him. He grabbed the rod and started reeling. Jackie grabbed his dip net and walked around to the front of the boat where the battle was going on. The striper had been pulled near the top of the water, and it was netted, a good one at 25 inches long, biggest of the day. Soon afterwards, George hooked another one, second biggest of the day, and our guide netted it. He asked if that was anything like catching mountain trout. Of course, the answer was in the negative.

We kept fishing the same area for a while, and I finally caught a fish, nothing to brag about, but a keeper. We stayed there another halfhour or so and caught two more stripers.

Then we went across and farther up the lake, where Jackie's sonar screen was "stacked up" with fish. He positioned his boat a little way up-

wind, and we began drifting toward the stripers. We dropped our lines overboard, and after a few minutes, we had another striper, then a little later, another one.

But Jackie figured that we should be having faster action with so many fish showing on his sonar screen. He baited us up with smaller shad, and right away the fun resumed. We caught our limit, plus two hybrid stripers not quite long enough to keep, which we tossed back.

It was one of my best days on the lake and a real experience for my new neighbor. Often when I take someone new to a favorite fishing spot, things are not nearly as exciting as this trip on St. Patty's Day, but I believe George Staller figured it was a real successful trip. I believe he caught the "striper bug."

Fishing Reports

BUCHANAN Water clear; 65 degrees; 15.66' low. Black bass are fair on hard jerkbaits, pumpkin JDC Craws, JDC Rock-Raw trailers, and black/blue Whacky Sticks on jigheads