

January 25, 2018 - How to find striper schools on your graph

Written by Wayne Gustaveson

Thursday, 25 January 2018 09:28 - Last Updated Friday, 26 January 2018 11:42

Lake Powell Fish Report – January 25, 2017 Lake Elevation: 3620 Water Temperature: 50-53
F By: Wayne Gustaveson

<http://www.wayneswords.com>

The last report indicated a change in striper behavior with striper schools in Wahweap and Warm Creek still searching for shad but not finding them. This week we chose to go uplake further to see if similar conditions existed. The early morning trip to Padre Bay was chilly but we made it without frostbite. Cooperative schools of stripers were found at 75 to 90 feet in Gunsight, Padre and Kane Canyons. They responded well to spoons dropped right in the middle of striper pods. Previous reports detailed how to catch fish from schools. This report will be aimed at finding schools which is the most critical element of fishing success in winter months.

Stripers are now resting on the lake bottom in deep water toward the back of the canyon. They prefer to be in deep water and are often at the breaking edge where the depth quickly changes from shallow to deep water. To clarify, they are either standing on the edge of a cliff looking down or they are on the bottom at the base of a cliff. Schools are most often seen where depth quickly changes from 40 to 75 feet or deeper.

Resting schools look like this:

On my graph it shows a little bump on the bottom with some red color instead of just the yellow bottom line. Usually there are one or two fish traces just above the bottom bump. Stop the boat immediately and drop spoons on the insignificant looking bottom feature. If the spoon hits right in the middle of the school, chances of getting the fish to wake up and get excited increases dramatically. If you are 20-30 yards past the school it is much harder to get them going. These fish are dreaming about shad so a spoon that dances up and down 2 feet off the bottom is really hard to resist. Hook one fish and the rest will follow.

This graph picture shows traditional sonar on the left and scanning sonar on the right. I don't know how they work but it seems the left pictures shows a 2D picture and the right shows 3D which makes it easier to tell fish from trees and rocks.

As stripers separate from the bottom and swim up to look at your lure they appear to be real fish instead of just a bottom bump. Individual fish traces are seen on both sides of the graph - lines on the left and dots on the right. In this mode they are ready to bite and catching begins. If fish are swimming after the lures but not biting try speed reeling up 20 feet and then drop back to the bottom. The sight of fleeing shad can get the dormant school energized.

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After the first fish is hooked the school will immediately move toward and follow the first fish. The bottom bump that looked like a flat red rock, transitions into a school of a hundred stripers or more that covers most of the graph. When this happens the school will follow the spoons and stay under the boat if the boat is drifting slowly. If a breeze is blowing then the spot-lock trolling motor will keep the boat in one place and more fish will be caught before the school slips away.

Back at the fish cleaning station we found no shad in the stomachs. Many of the smaller fish had plankton in the stomachs while the 2-3 pound stripers had a few crayfish and empty stomachs. Shad are now missing in action in the southern lake. I really hope they have found a safe haven so there will be a few survivors to bring off a decent shad spawn in May.

On this day we were able to keep one school under the boat for almost an hour and other schools were below us for 10-15 minutes. Two anglers caught 60 stripers in 2 hours of fishing. If my math is done correctly that is one fish every two minutes.

I really love spooning for stripers in the winter.

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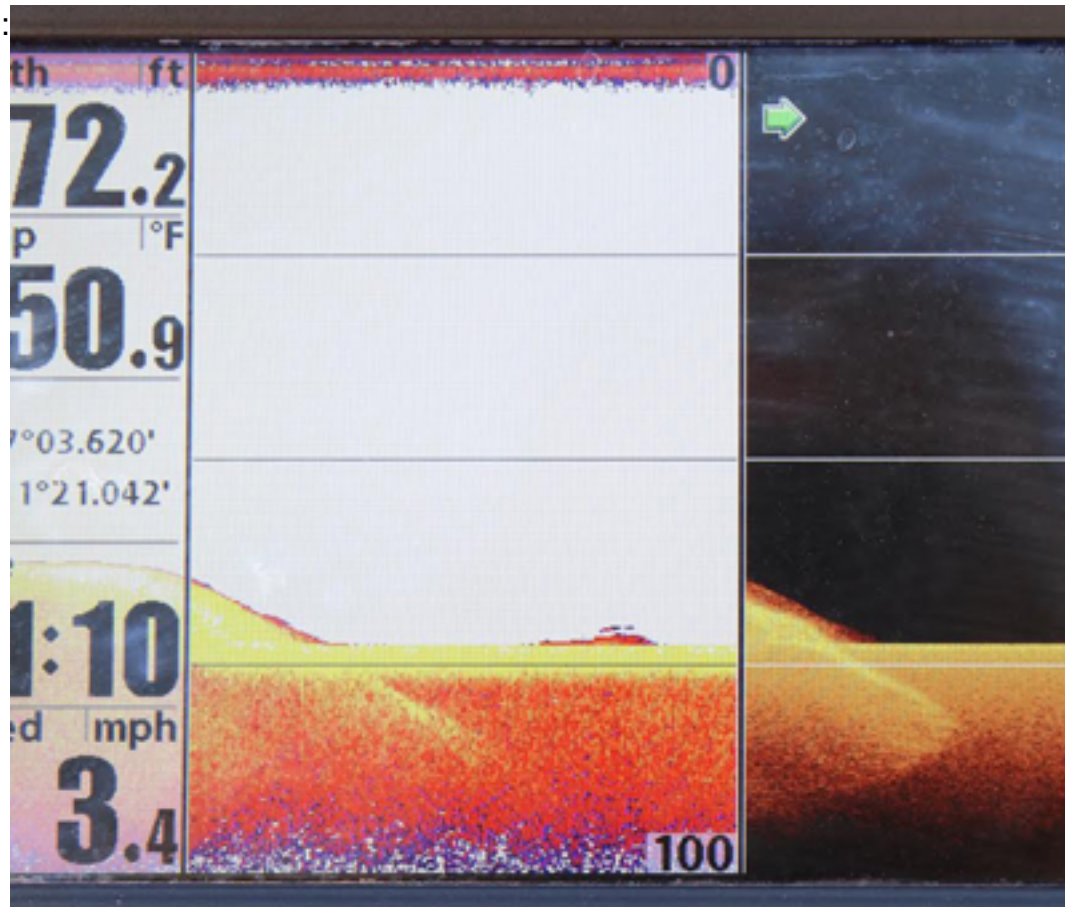
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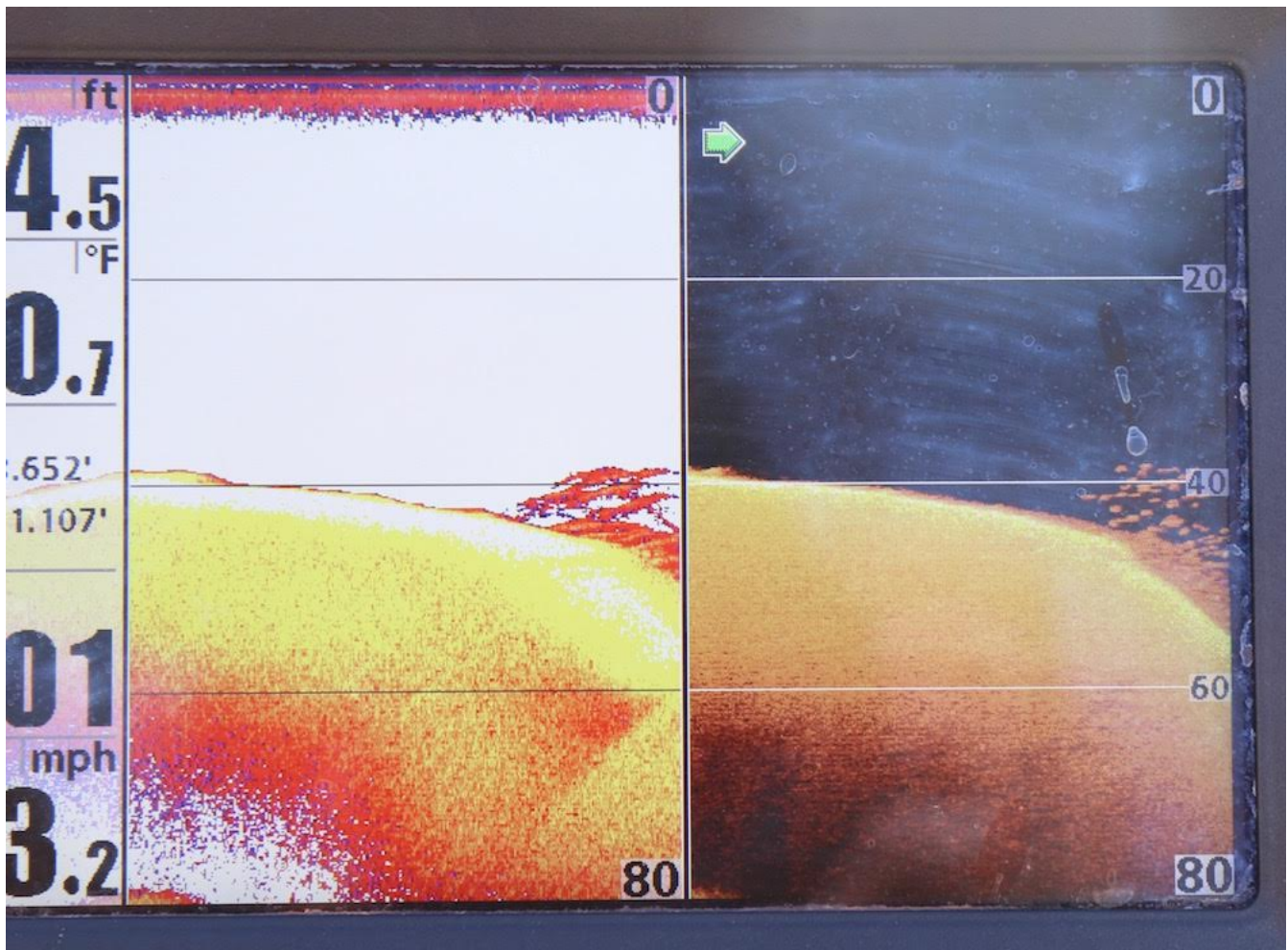
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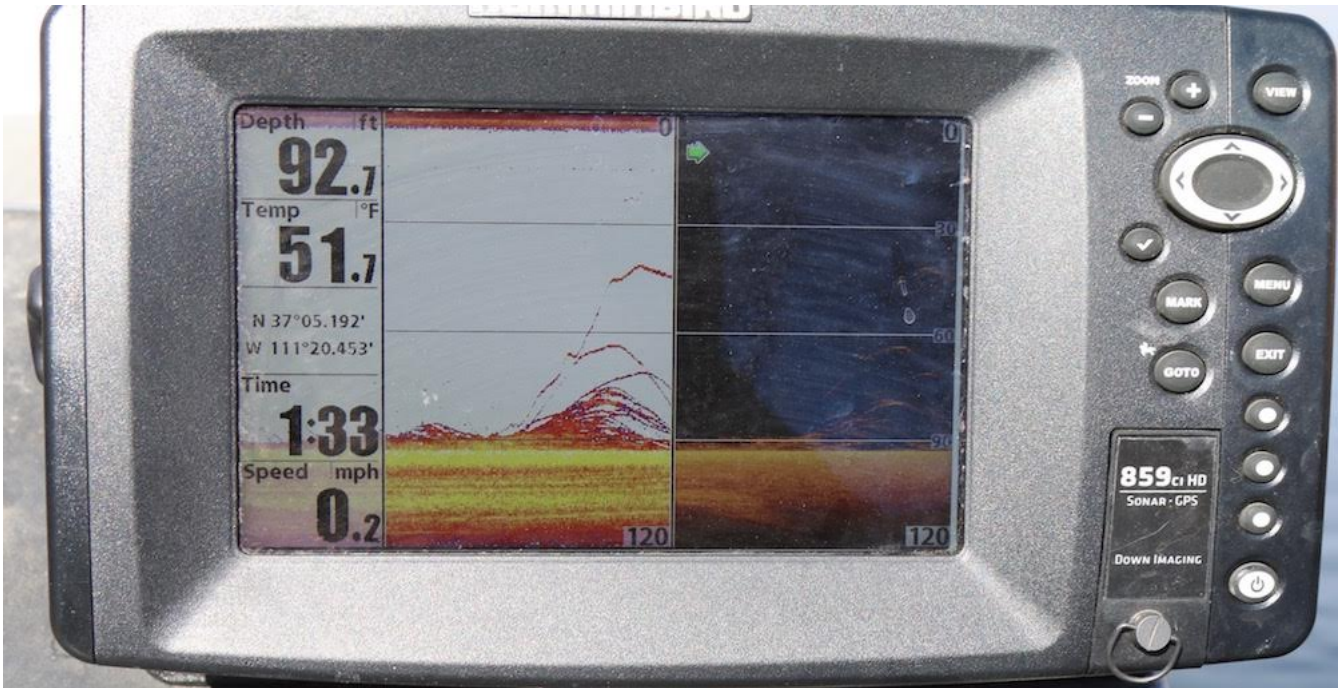
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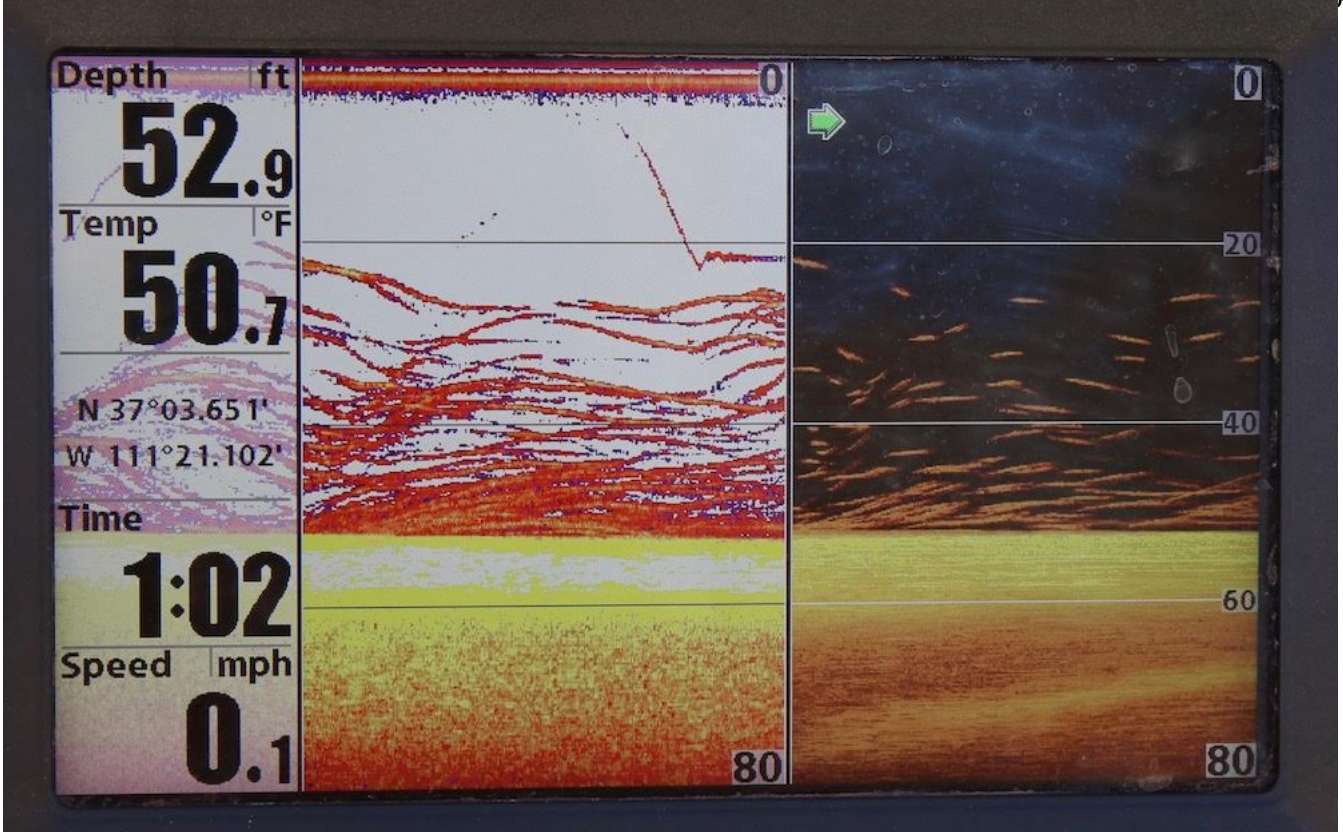
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to fish, but swim forward and the pressure sensor will rise and you will see a 20-foot bubble when you drop back

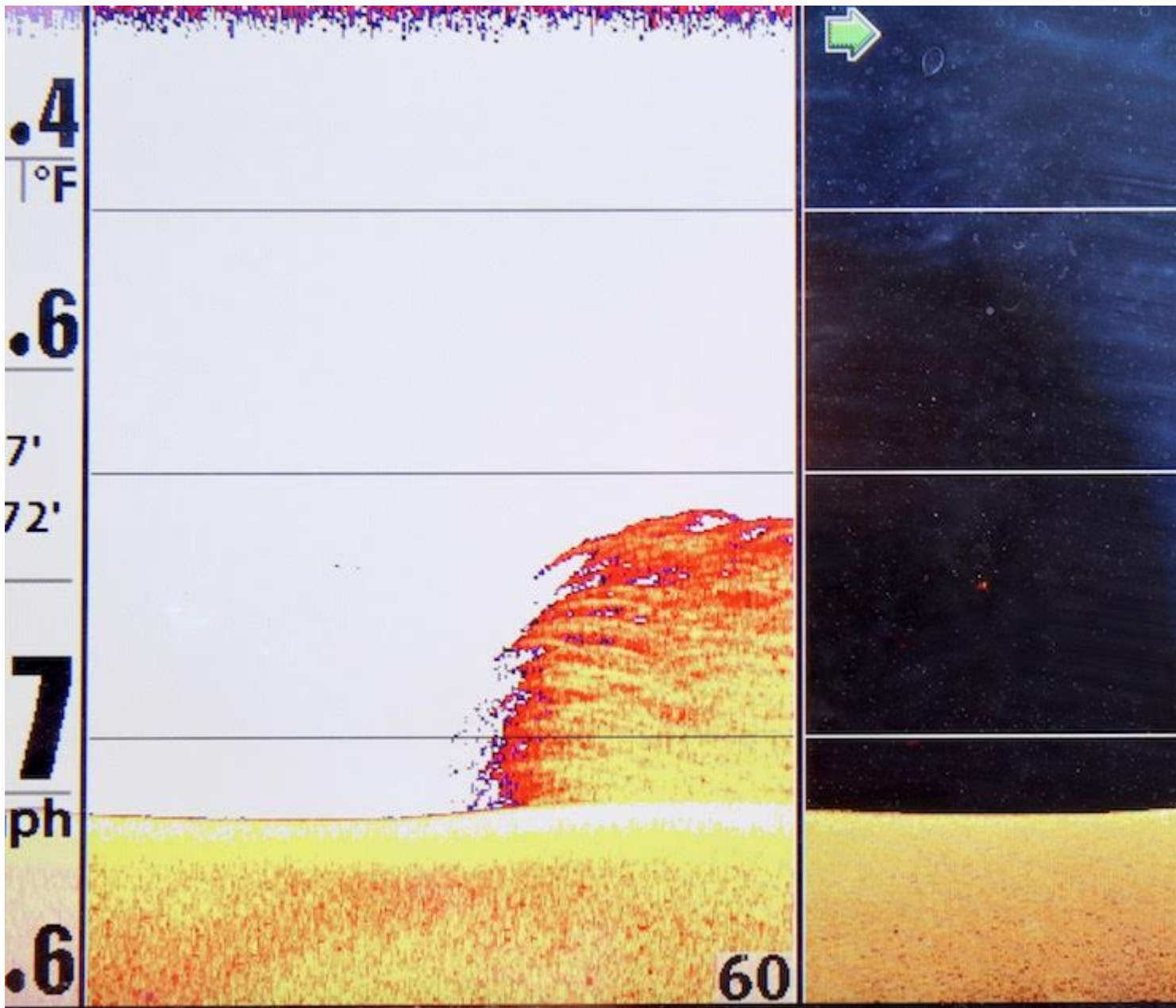


So you can see the result of the pressure sensor rising and you will see a 20-foot bubble when you drop back

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the always to be caught and stripers in the winter. So let's go to see a winter school like this