

STRIPERMAN (from page 32)

My old SeaCraft had an antiquated Mercury mechanical steering cable, which was the cause of many headaches. It was also the only reason I was ever towed - not once, but twice - in my fishing career. The first time it broke, I went to the Essex Marine Hardware located right on the river to order a new one. When I approached the sales counter, I noticed a giant pair of binoculars mounted on a pedestal that looked like they belonged on a battleship!

The busy clerks would look every time they passed it. Curiosity finally took over, so I asked what they were looking at. They said, "You wouldn't believe if; we've been watching this guy just hammering big stripers down at marker number 25." I could feel my face getting red and my knees going weak; I couldn't believe it, but it just had to be me. I didn't say a word until I regained my composure, and then I asked if I could take a peek. "Sure," he said, and imagine my surprise when I looked and saw there was a clear view right through the moored boats at the very spot I had been fishing. Those binoculars were so powerful that the fact they didn't recognize me is still a mystery. I pulled my hat down and ordered the cable.

I figured the word would be out and within days the fleet would be fishing my secret spot. Somehow, it didn't happen, and the secret was kept for a couple more years. Getting used to believing someone was watching me fish was a bit of a challenge, but it never stopped me.

The only other short story about this marker happened after Rivers End Tackle was opened. One of our customers was new to striper fishing and asked a bunch of questions. Week after week he would stop by the shop, asking about techniques, but mostly inquiring how to find spots to fish. He was a nice guy and a very good customer, so I tried to teach him as much as possible from the showroom floor; he told me that he kept his boat in Essex. I hadn't mentioned marker 25 because it was still

not a well-known striper spot, and he seemed to be more interested in trolling spots outside of the river.

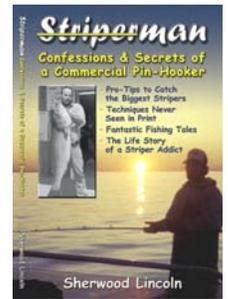
My next day off was windy, so my decision was the fish the river. I had not fished Essex for a least a full season, so when I drove up to my little reef, I was quite surprised to find that Essex had expanded the mooring area and the transom of a cabin cruiser was sitting right smack on top of my bass spot.

"Well, why not try?" I thought, and I tossed live menhaden around that boat. The motor must have woken the otherwise unknown occupant of the cruiser, and out of the cabin stepped my bass-questioning customer, who stretched his arms, yawned, and said, "Hello!"

Just then a bass started blasting the menhaden. The bass and bait had put on quite a show before the bass broke off the chase. How ironic that the guy trying to learn all he could about striper fishing spots had parked his boat right on top of possibly the best spot on the Connecticut River. All he had to do was drop a chunk off the transom. We greeted each other, but he never asked a question about the bass chasing menhaden, or anything else. He continued to shop at Rivers End, asking questions about catching bass on the outside trolling. I suspect he's still a good customer.

Sherwood Lincoln, a RISAA member, lives in eastern Connecticut. He has fished and hunted from the Arctic Circle to Key West, FL. His passion has always been striped bass.

You can purchase his book for only \$19.95 at Watch Hill Outfitters, the Saltwater Edge or at Amazon.com



All you need to be
a fisherman is patience
and a worm

Herb Shriver

Fish come and go,
but it is the memory of afternoons
on the stream that endure.

E. Donnell Thomas

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