



*American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists*  
*Promoting excellence in fishery science*

... **BRIEFS** ...

Website: [www.iattc.org/aifrb/](http://www.iattc.org/aifrb/)

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## President's Message

Dear AIFRB Members

Now that the symposium is completed, we are working again on the AIFRB web pages. If you have suggestions about information you would like to see on the web site, let me know.

Awards to recognize and support outstanding research in fisheries and conservation are an important part of the AIFRB mission. An important benefit of membership in AIFRB is the opportunity to nominate appropriate people for these awards. We are currently seeking nominations for:

OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD  
OUTSTANDING GROUP ACHIEVEMENT AWARD  
RESEARCH ASSISTANCE SHIP AWARDS.

The nominations and due dates for these awards are announced in this issue of *Briefs* and are described on the AIFRB web site. If you need more information about the award, you can contact your Regional Director.

Please take the time to write a nomination for one or more of the awards. We depend on your nominations for them.

Happy Spring.

Linda

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## Nominations Needed: Outstanding Achievement Awards

The Outstanding Achievement Awards are the highest recognition given to individuals and to research groups by the AIFRB. We are soliciting your nominations for these Awards. This is your opportunity to provide nominations and help AIFRB recognize the individuals and organizations that are making outstanding contributions to our science.

**Individual Achievement Award** is given to an individual who has made significant contributions to the advancement of fishery science. This is the highest AIFRB award for achievement. Candidates are rated on the following criteria: significance of publications, exceptional service to the profession, outstanding teaching or training of students, important discoveries or inventions, and significant contributions to the advancement of fishery science.

**Group Achievement Award** is given to research groups with outstanding records of scientific contribution to fishery science or fishery resource policy. It is the Institute's highest award recognizing research groups that nurture excellence in fishery science. Candidates will be rated on the following criteria: sustained contribution of significant publications, exceptional service of the fishery profession, outstanding teaching or training programs, important discoveries or inventions, and significant contributions to the advancement of fishery science.

**To nominate an individual or research group:** Submit a letter fully describing how the nominee meets the criteria for the award. Include the name, address, telephone number and email address of the nominee and a short resume of the nominee. Please include your name, address, telephone number and email address.

**Nominations due:** JULY 15, 2007

Submit nominations to: Dr. William Fox,

Southwest Fishery Science Center, NMFS,

8604 La Jolla Shores Drive

La Jolla, CA 92037-1508

Phone: (858) 546-7000

Fax: (858) 546-7003

The AIFRB is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization (EIN 61-6050711).

If you have any questions, please contact:

Bill Fox William.Fox@noaa.gov

Jack Helle Jack.Helle@noaa.gov

Bill Taylor Taylorw@msu.edu

## **Previous Awards**

### **Group Outstanding Achievement Award**

1982, Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences; 1983, Great Lakes Sea Lamprey Control Program; 1984, Harvesting Technology Division, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS; 1985, Sport Fishing Institute; 1986, International Pacific Halibut Commission; 1988, Southwest Fisheries Center, NMFS, La Jolla, CA; 1992, Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Units Center & Related Coop Units; 1997, International North Pacific Fisheries Commission; 1998, The Illinois Natural History Survey; 1999, National Fish Health Research Laboratory, USGS, Kearneyville, WV; 2000, International Pacific Halibut Commission; 2002, The Great Lakes Fishery Commission; 2003, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, Ecotoxicology Research Team

### **Individual Outstanding Achievement Award**

1979, Elbert H. Ahlstrom; 1980, James E. Sykes; 1981, F. Heward Bell; 1982, Richard H. Stroud; 1983, Kenneth D. Carlander; 1984, David W. Schindler; 1985, Peter Larkin; 1986, William G. Gordon; 1987, William F. Royce; 1988, Reuben Lasker; 1991, Robert L. Burgner; 1992, William W. Fox; 1993, Arthur D. Hasler; 1994, William E. Ricker; 1995, Raymond J.H. Beverton; 1996, Reeve M. Bailey; 1997, William G. Percy; 1998, John H.S. Blaxter; 1999, Saul B. Saila; 2000, John R. Hunter; 2001, Kenneth E. Wolf; 2002, Fred Utter; 2003, Howard Bern; 2004, Brian Rothschild; 2005, John Fryer; 2006, Geoffrey Moser

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## **Apply Now!**

### **2007 AIFRB Research Assistance Award Program**

The Research Assistance (RA) Award established in 1986 is offered annually to AIFRB graduate students and other Associate members to support travel expenses associated with professional development. The RA provides a maximum award of \$500 towards the opportunity to present results of an original paper or research project of merit at scientific meetings, or to conduct research at distant study sites. All AIFRB Associate Members in good standing are eligible ([www.aifrb.org](http://www.aifrb.org)). An individual may receive one award in a lifetime. Application packages must contain a research abstract, letter of support from the student's sponsor, and a 2-page curriculum vitae. Send AIFRB RA applications to: Dr. Jerald S. Ault, University of Miami RSMAS, 4600 Rickenbacker Causeway, Miami, FL 33149, (305) 421-4884 ph; (305) 421-4791 (fax); [jault@rsmas.miami.edu](mailto:jault@rsmas.miami.edu). Deadline is 1700 EDT on June 15, 2007.

## **Board of Control To Meet**

At the AFS 137<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, San Francisco, September 1-6, 2007

The AIFRB Board of Control (BOC) will be meeting on September 1 and 2, 2007, at the 137<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society at the Downtown Marriott in San Francisco. Following the end of the BOC meeting on Sunday, September 2, from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, AIFRB will host a reception for both members and non-members. We especially encourage students to drop in and meet AIFRB members, and to learn about the various research and travel awards that we offer. Young professionals will also be interested to learn about our newly installed Kasahara Early Career Award. We also hope to recruit both students and professional fishery research biologists to submit applications for AIFRB membership. In addition, we are planning to have a hospitality room open for the duration of the AFS Annual Meeting, so be sure to drop in if you are planning to attend. Please encourage your non-member (and member!) students or colleagues to drop in and learn more about the Institute.

*Submitted by: Tom Keegan*

# Watson Award Nominations

## C.W. Watson Award

Nominations are being sought for the 2007 Clarence W. Watson Award. This annual award will be presented at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Conference in Charleston, West Virginia, October 21-24, 2007.

The Clarence W. Watson Award is the most prestigious award given in the Southeast and is presented to the career individual who, in the opinion of the Award Committee, has made the greatest contribution to wildlife or fish conservation during the previous year or years. Consideration includes research, administration, law enforcement, I&E, wildlife management, fish management, teachers, and students. Preference is given to nominees in the Southeast. The award is a mounted bronze plaque presented jointly by the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society, the Southeastern Section of the Wildlife Society, and the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

All Southeastern U.S. fish and wildlife conservationists and other interested persons are encouraged to nominate worthy candidates. Nominations should be submitted in the format shown below and should include complete information on the candidate's background; i.e., education, training, noteworthy accomplishments, and particularly, the achievement(s) for which the nomination is being made. The nomination should include, but not be limited to, a description of the accomplishment(s), application in the state and region concerned, time involved, and the amount of aid received from associates. As much information as possible should be furnished to aid the committee in making the selection. A previously unselected nominee may be resubmitted each year.

Selection will be based on specific accomplishment(s) and other information included in the letter of nomination. Nominations should be sent to: Robert Warren, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602; warren@warnell.uga.edu; 706-542-4741 as soon as possible, but **not later than August 1, 2007**. Electronic submissions are encouraged.

*Editor's Note: Marine conservationists are greatly underrepresented in the list of Watson Award winners. Take time to nominate one of the many worthy potential recipients who have furthered marine conservation in the southeastern U.S.*

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## Student Presentation and Poster Judging

### AIFRB Judges Student's Work

The **AIFRB Northern California District** will organize and preside over the judging of AFS Western Division student presentations and posters at the Annual Meeting. **AIFRB Southern California District** members will also participate as judges. However, Any AIFRB member who will be attending the AFS Annual Meeting, and is interested in helping us with the presentation and/or poster judging, is asked to please contact Thomas Keegan (tkeegan@ecorpconsulting.com), Coordinator for the Western Division Student Presentation and Poster Judging. The **Northern California District** has coordinated student presentation and poster judging for six straight years at annual CalNeva Symposia (including the joint Western Division/CalNeva Symposium in San Diego).

*Submitted by: Thomas Keegan*

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## Symposium Proceedings to be Published

New England Director Steve Cadrin announced that Springer will be publishing the proceedings of the AIFRB Anniversary Symposium at no cost to AIFRB. The timeline for publication is as follows: (1) All manuscripts are due on the 1st of May; (2) All materials will be delivered to the publisher by the end of this year; (3) Proceedings should come out in early 2008.

The cost for the book will be in the range of \$70 to \$75. However, all authors will receive a free copy.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada has agreed to purchase approximately 300 copies.

# Midyear BOC Ponders \$

President Jones commended the Symposium fundraising committee for raising \$70,000. Major contributions came from such organizations as NMFS and Fishery and Ocean, Canada.

Treasurer Allen Shimada reported that currently there is \$53K in place from the anniversary symposium. However, there may be additional expenses that will need to be paid. There is currently \$10,300 in the operating budget. These funds will be needed to cover two issues of *Briefs* and costs of the BOC meeting. It is estimated that \$2,300 will be on hand at the end of the year. Currently we derive approximately \$5,100 from dividends.

Past President Gary Sakagawa presented two proposals; (1) Change source of funding for the Thompson and Research Assistance Awards from operating income to income derived from the Founders Fund and; (2) Allocate \$1K in the 07-08 budget for support of the 5th World Fisheries Congress.

A motion by J. Rachlin to approve both proposals was seconded and unanimously approved by the BOC.

*Submitted by: Barbara Warkentine*

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## Fellow Rothschild Receives Another Well-Deserved Accolade

### 2007 NOAA Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards

NOAA has just announced recipients of the second-annual sustainable fisheries leadership awards. NOAA Fisheries developed the national award program to honor innovation and excellence in marine stewardship. Recipients of the 2007 Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards were selected from 60 nominations for awards in six categories of achievement.

AIFRB Fellow **Brian Rothschild** will receive a Special Recognition Award for his long and sustained contributions to marine science and education. He is widely recognized as one of the most cited fishery scientists in the world, publishing over 100 scientific papers and book chapters. He is a former dean of the School of Marine Science and Technology at the University of Massachusetts and a resident of New Bedford, MA.

**Other awardees are:** **Don Hansen** will receive a Special Recognition Award for improving the management programs for west coast marine fisheries fostering open dialogue and understanding between Pacific fishery scientists, managers, and fishing communities. He is a member of the Pacific Fishery Management Council and a resident of Dana Point, CA; **Don Kent** will receive the Stewardship and Sustainability Award for furthering our understanding on minimizing the impacts of fishing operations on killer whales and for his pioneering research projects with marine finfish aquaculture and stock enhancement off the coast of California. He is president of Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute, located in San Diego; **The Coastal Conservation Association of Texas** will receive the Conservation Partnership Award for promoting volunteerism through its Bay Debris Cleanup program that brought together a broad group of citizens, industry, and local, state and federal governments to clear tons of debris from the bay and beach in coastal Texas. The Association is based in Corpus Christi; **World Wildlife Fund** will receive the Science, Research, and Technology Award for inspiring innovation to reduce bycatch in the world's fisheries through its Smart Gear Competition. The organization is headquartered in Washington, DC; **Amigos de Bolsa Chica (Friends of Bolsa Chica)** will receive the Coastal Habitat Restoration Award for preserving the 1,200 acre Bolsa Chica wetlands off the California coast allowing fresh ocean water to enter the wetlands for the first time in over 90 years. The organization is based in Orange County; **The John G. Shedd Aquarium** will receive the Public Education, Community Service, and Media Award for educating and equipping consumers to make good personal decisions about seafood consumption, and educating the public about Great Lakes fisheries. The Shedd Aquarium is in Chicago; In Addition, **Nelson Beideman** will be recognized posthumously for his lifetime contributions tireless efforts to preserve the economic viability of the pelagic longline fleet through sustainable fishing practices, and through reduction of sea turtle and marine mammal by-catch in the fishery. He was co-founder and executive director of Blue Water Fishermen's Association based in Barnegat Light, NJ.

#### **About the Award**

The Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards were created to recognize outstanding performance, achievements and leadership by industries, organizations and individuals whose contributions to science and management have served to promote best stewardship practices for the sustained use of the Nation's living marine resources. The Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards were initiated in June 2005 by the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. With the assistance of Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, criteria were established for six award categories encompassing the fundamental elements necessary for promoting a public stewardship either over our nation's living marine resources and assisting NOAA with fulfilling its stewardship mission.

Administered by NOAA Fisheries Service, nominations to the Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards are to be held annually for the following award categories; (1) Special Recognition Award; (2) Stewardship and Sustainability Award; (3) Conservation Partnership Award; (4) Science, Research and Technology Award; (5) Coastal Habitat Restoration Award; (6) Public Education, Community Service & Media Award.

Nominations for the first annual awards were solicited in November 2005, resulting in 28 nominations. Winners for the inaugural awards were announced in April 2006 and an awards ceremony was held June 2006 in Washington, D.C.

The awards program is open to industry sectors, organizations, individuals, state, local and federal government agencies and their employees. Organizations, individuals and agencies cannot nominate themselves. Employees of NOAA Fisheries Service are not eligible to receive an award under any category. The awarding of categories will be entirely dependent on the pool of eligible candidates received and the agency's determination as to their qualifications. As such, there may be years in which one or more categories are not awarded.

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## Editorial Ranting: Things to fix

Being naturally disinclined to unnecessary work, I only occasionally trouble myself with expending effort in producing opinion pieces. But from time to time enough glaring blank space impends for an issue of *Briefs* and enough bile sloshes around in my innards to stir me to editorial pontificating. On the other hand the editor's high altitude overview of the Institute and long term appointment do provide a perspective on the health of the organization that ought to generate suggestions with merit. So maybe the editor has a responsibility to bellyache when things aren't working as well as she thinks they ought to work. Presuming that vitality and growth are sought-for attributes in the AIFRB let me point out some things that I believe need fixing.

First I don't believe that we use our membership very well. When I look at major efforts of the AIFRB they seem, over and over, to be run by the same dozen or two people, mostly members of the Board of Control. To some extent the Anniversary Symposium did not follow that pattern closely but over the last decade or so that event was an exception. I believe that our sister (cousin, godfather, grandmum, whatever) organization, the American Fisheries Society, remains extraordinarily vital because it reaches deep into its membership rolls to find chairs and members of important committees and does not rely repeatedly on its Excom members. Thus a large fraction of the AFS membership is intimately involved in the daily working of the Society and consequently is enthused and enfranchised. Given that most AIFRB members are the same folks that are donating lots of energy to the AFS I believe that we could expect the same level of contribution to the AIFRB, if we asked for it.

Second, we have become ever-increasingly an organization that represents only marine interests. In my darker moments I am not certain that based on activity alone (overlooking for a moment our elitist membership requirements) that you can really tell the difference between the AIFRB and the Marine Fisheries Section of the American Fisheries Society. Our Anniversary Symposium gives first class evidence of that bias. (n.b. the editorial content of *Briefs* isn't much better!) Just look at the list of sponsors, presenters and titles for the symposium (last issue of *Briefs*). Now the symposium was a magnificent effort, a tribute to the organizers and the Institute. But if I were trying to sell the Institute to a potential member from Nebraska, I don't think that she would find much of immediate interest there. The AIFRB was always predominantly a marine and Pacific-anadromous-salmonid organization, but four of 26 charter members (15+ percent) were biologists with clearcut freshwater interests and some of the other 22 had mixed allegiances. We no longer give evidence of even a 15 percent interest in freshwater activities. If we want the AIFRB to be as strong and vital as it ought to be can we increasingly ignore all the potential membership in America's heartland? We ought to immediately devise program and policy changes that would allow us some appeal to freshwater-oriented potential members and to inaugurate an active inland recruitment program.

So what are these program and policy changes we need? And the answer to this question brings me to my third need for repair: the institute does not play to its strong suit, it does not emphasize nearly enough that, by charter and by-laws, its main emphases are professionalism and ethics. You all have heard the question, "How do youse guys differ from the AFS?" Holding symposia and publishing journals, as noble as are these enterprises, clearly will not distinguish us from the AFS. They have us beat hands down on both fronts. Our merit-based membership requirements begin to make the crucial distinction but insufficiently. (Potential member: "Oh, I see, you are just like the AFS but are a lot harder to join!") Our awards programs are a valuable part of the distinction. They allow us to recognize and reward professionalism and excellence. But nowhere do I see any effort towards enforcing our ethics standards. Without enforcement of what use are they? Have we castigated a fisheries scientist for misleading the public? Have we ejected a member for unethical behavior? (c'mon there are nearly 500 of us. One of us must be a louse!) Have we gone to bat for fisheries scientists trying to do their job but whose controversial findings are being suppressed or misconstrued so as to achieve some political end, or who are being denied promotions or financial rewards proportional to

their training and performance. Remember the AIFRB had its origins in a dustup between the State of Washington Department of Fisheries and its professional fisheries scientists. What happened to that spirit? If we do not distinguish, and I mean distinguish by deed as well as word, our Institute from the American Fisheries Society do we have any reason for a separate existence?

So there's my diatribe of the month. I have strong suspicions that not everyone will agree with me. But the beauty of our relationship is that you have the same access to the AIFRB membership through the pages of *Briefs* that I do. In ten years now I have never turned away a member-offered piece and in fact I encourage you to write. I guarantee to print your written opinion. And remember that the more that you write, the less likely you are to see all that white space filled with my drivel. *Editor*

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## Open Letter to the Board of Control

I was pleased to read the coverage about the Symposium on The Future of Fishery Science in North America in the recent issue of *Briefs*. The fact that the idea of the symposium first surfaced seven years ago during Gary Sakagawa's tenure as President speaks to the need and advantages of "planning ahead". In that regard, I think it is time for the Board of Control to plan an "in house" symposium on The Future of the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists.

I recently reviewed the membership of AIFRB.\* I was surprised to learn that there were only 664 now on the rolls — i.e. about half the 1,200 during the 3 years I was president (1982 -84). On further examination of the data, I found that only 485 were paid-up members in 2006 and only 439 in 2007. About 20% of the paid-up members had Emeritus status and were not required to pay dues prior to 2004 (?). I have no recollection of seeing membership data published in *Briefs* in recent years and think all should be aware of the current situation. The 50% decline in 20 years does not bode well for the organization, particularly considering the increase in the number of biologists in various fields that could qualify for membership. In my opinion, the situation is aggravated by the fact that the presidency of AIFRB in recent years is dominated by federal employees and West Coasters.

At one time, AIFRB had some objectives and programs that were distinct from those of the American Fisheries Society. For the most part, that is no longer true and AFS now claims about 9,000 members and has 52 Chapters and 21 Sections in comparison to AIFRB's 12 "active" Districts — emphasizing our membership problem. While the establishment of new funds for grants and the potential of an "on-line publication" offer promising attributes, they are over-shadowed by the declining membership and it is time for realistic decisions about AIFRB's future. I think the Board of Control should provide a list of options and poll the membership for the preferred action.

*Bernard E. Skud*

*Interestingly neither Bernie nor I knew the other was writing about the vitality of the Institute. His and my pieces were written completely independently. Ed.*

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## Herke Monograph Online

In the 1970's I (Bill Herke) tried to publish a monograph that contradicted many of the fisheries paradigms of that time. In my opinion, it was the best thing I wrote in my 40-year career. My greatest professional disappointment is that it was too far ahead of its time to get it past the journal reviewers. If it had been published in a journal, I believe it would have had a significant effect on fisheries science. After several years of trying to satisfy various reviewers, I copyrighted and "published" it myself, but this procedure gave it very little circulation.

In the succeeding years, many of the conclusions in the monograph have been reached by other researchers, so the monograph is somewhat dated. Nevertheless, there is still much in it that is pertinent today. Consequently, since I am now semi-retired, I have had the time to put it on a website ([www.herke-estuarine-fisheries.com](http://www.herke-estuarine-fisheries.com)) to make it more readily available. Also on the website is a list of 60 different reprints on various coastal fisheries issues. These are available on request by using the email form on the website.

If you have an interest in such things as coastal marsh nursery use, organism growth rates, environmental factors affecting emigration, recruitment periods, initial spawning age, and length frequency analysis, I invite you to visit the website.

W. H. (Bill) Herke, Ph. D.

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# NOAA Recruitment Website

We (NOAA, U.S. Dept. of Commerce) are pleased to announce the unveiling of the New NOAA Recruitment Website. This new comprehensive recruitment website has been designed to showcase NOAA Career Opportunities and all that NOAA has to offer. The website can be accessed from the NOAA homepage by clicking on “Careers” on the left-side navigation. We believe you will find the new website to be appealing, informative, user friendly, and easy to manage and navigate.

Please make a note of the website address — Careers.NOAA.gov (<http://careers.noaa.gov>) and join the effort in marketing NOAA as an employer by sharing the address at meetings, conferences or other venues that may be potential sources of quality applicants for NOAA positions.

We could not have completed this “first phase” of the recruitment website without the efforts of line and corporate staff who assisted us during the pilot testing and provided comments to help us improve the appearance and content of the site. We will continue to build on the website by adding features that provide details on our specialty positions and insight on the day-to-day work of these jobs, so please stay tuned. If you have comments or questions about the site, please contact Theodoris Corbett at [Theodoris.L.Corbett@noaa.gov](mailto:Theodoris.L.Corbett@noaa.gov) or 301-713-6366.

*Submitted by: Allen Shimada*

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## America’s Most Endangered Rivers of 2007

1. Santa Fe River (New Mexico), complete diversion; 2. San Mateo Creek (California), proposed highway; 3. Iowa River (Iowa), weak enforcement of Clean Water Act; 4. Upper Delaware River (New York), proposed powerline corridor; 5. White Salmon River (Washington), existing Condit Dam; 6. Neches River (Texas), proposed impoundment; 7. Kinnickinnic River (Wisconsin), toxic waste in sediments; 8. Neuse River (North Carolina), factory hog “Farms”, rapid urban development; 9. Lee Creek (Arkansas, Oklamona), proposed dam, weakened regulation; 10. Chuitna River (Alaska), proposed coal mine.

*List from: American Rivers, April 17, 2007*

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## Coddock?

ROCKPORT, ME. - It’s not quite a haddock. It’s not quite a cod. Meet the “coddock,” the latest catch for two dragger fishermen out of Rockport. Paul Theriault, captain and owner of the day boat dragger Terminator, based in Pigeon Cove Harbor, and crewman Joe Roderick have landed a most bizarre haddock. Last Thursday, the Terminator’s groundfish net scooped the coddock from the 300-foot muddy bottom east of Thacher’s Island during its first tow of the day, which ended around 10:30 a.m. when Theriault and Roderick hauled back the fishing gear, then emptied and reset it. While sorting the cod, haddock and flounder catch on deck, Roderick threw any questionable-size fish needing measuring into a separate fish tote. Groundfishery regulations require haddock to be at least 19 inches long to be legally landed. Theriault then noticed the strange fish as it lay back-to-back alongside a cod in the tote. “The fish’s spots caught my eye right away,” he said. “I said to Joe, ‘Look at this. I’ve never seen one of these before in my 25 years of groundfishing.’” The 21-inch fish has a haddock body but also bears its close cousin cod’s traditional upper sides and back, olive-brown background, speckled color and pattern. Could this coddock possibly be the result of interbreeding between animal members of the same family - Gadidae in the case of the cod and haddock - like the mule and the Australian dingo? This specimen also possessed pairs of the normal haddock’s devil’s marks, or “God’s fingerprints,” as Theriault calls them, above its pectoral fins, and black lateral lines, a peaked first dorsal fin and a whitish-silver underside. Regular haddock have unspeckled, blackish-purple topsides, while traditional cod have white lateral lines, no devil’s marks, a more rounded first dorsal fin and also light-colored bellies. “I’m going to freeze this one for a while just in case the scientists are interested in doing a DNA test on it to see if it bred with a cod,” Theriault said. Two weeks ago, John Greenleaf and Mike Interrante hooked a rare golden haddock off Cape Ann aboard their Gloucester longliner, David & Jenna II. Although there’s mention of a golden haddock in “Bigelow & Schroeder’s Fishes of the Gulf of Maine,” there’s no record of such a cod-colored haddock in the text, which is full of fish oddities.

**By Peter K. Prybot, Correspondent**

Gloucester, MA. Daily Times

March 20, 2007

*Submitted by: Bernie Skud*

*Is an immature coddocka scroddock? Ed.*

# Pacific Council Grants

## Experimental Swordfish Permit

The Pacific Fishery Management Council recommended NMFS issue an exempted fishing permit (EFP) to allow a single vessel to fish in the West Coast exclusive economic zone targeting swordfish in 2007 only. The purpose of the EFP is to make an initial assessment of the economic viability of longline gear as an alternative to drift gillnet gear with potentially lower bycatch mortality. The EFP would be issued with a range of measures to mitigate environmental impacts. Key mitigation measures include:

- No fishing within 30 miles of the coastline;
- No fishing within the Southern California Bight;
- No fishing north of 45° N latitude;
- Compliance with existing highly migratory species FMP regulations, including protected species conservation measures;
- Mandatory 100% observer coverage;
- A cap on total fishing effort of no more than four trips, 14 sets per trip, 400-1,200 hooks per set (for a maximum of 67,200 hooks deployed overall);
- Fishing conducted between September and December;
- Use of 18/0 circle hooks with 10° offset;
- Use of mackerel bait and light sticks;
- Setting gear at night to reduce seabird mortality.

In addition, the Council recommended a catch cap of 12 striped marlin, and a take cap of one short-finned pilot whale. Caps on humpback and sperm whales and leatherback and loggerhead sea turtles, which are listed under the Endangered Species Act, will be equivalent to any amounts in the Incidental Take Statement that will be part of the Biological Opinion NMFS will prepare for the action. Caps on seabird takes would also be established based on an Incidental Take Statement that is part of the Biological Opinion the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may prepare for this action. If any of these caps are reached before the fishing effort cap or the end of the permitted time period is achieved, any continued fishing authorized under the EFP would cease immediately for the remainder of the year upon retrieval of any gear in the water.

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## While not endangered, American eels face numerous threats

**The population of adult eels in Chesapeake Bay has decreased significantly.**

*By Karl Blankenship*

American eels may not be endangered, but biologists still believe the snakelike fish needs plenty of help.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in January concluded that while the eel population has undergone significant declines in some places, including the Chesapeake Bay and the upper St. Lawrence River, it does not warrant listing as a threatened or endangered species. Eels face a number of threats, but still inhabit about 75 percent of their historic range in the United States and Canada, the service said. Reproduction – measured by the number of small “glass eels” seen in coastal areas – appears stable, the service concluded. “The eel population as a whole shows significant resiliency,” said Heather Bell, the USFWS biologist who led the review. “If we look at eels over time, we’d see fluctuations in the population numbers, so a decreasing number of eels right now does not necessarily forecast an irreversible trend.” The review was spurred by a petition filed in 2004 by two brothers, Tim Watts of Massachusetts and Doug Watts of Maine, who expressed concern about declines of eels in some of their favorite fishing areas, where they were unable to get past dams. Nonetheless, concern about eels remains high among many fishery biologists and managers. In the Chesapeake Bay – considered the heart of the eel population – long-running surveys by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science have documented a significant decline in the number of yellow eels since 1979. “I think what we are seeing is representative of what is going on along the coast, as well as in Canada,” said Marcel Montane, who oversees the VIMS eel survey. “We’ve seen a large decrease.” Others report similar, if anecdotal, observations. Declines have been noted at the Conowingo dam on the Susquehanna River, where large numbers of eels were once routinely seen trying to slither over the 100-foot-high structure. “You talk to everybody; in the 1970s they were just crawling all over that dam,” said Steve Minkinen, who heads the USFWS Maryland Fisheries office. “People used to go there and get them for bait. There was only been one year in the last 10 where people saw a lot there.”

Eels have a complex life cycle. They are born in the Sargasso Sea in the mid-Atlantic, and the larvae float with currents until they enter coastal areas as transparent, worm-like glass eels. As they gain pigmentation, and move into estuaries, they become elvers, and then larger yellow eels which range everywhere from coastal waters to the farthest headwater streams. As they mature, they can reach lengths of more than 2 feet, and finally become darker olive eels, which migrate back to the Sargasso Sea to spawn, then die.

Although they can be found in almost every aquatic habitat, they are also vulnerable to a variety of impacts. They are fished, largely for bait; exposed to chemical contaminants in some areas; and in recent years many have become infected with nonnative parasites that may impact their ability to swim. Dams impede their movements up and down rivers, and changing ocean currents may affect the distribution of their larvae along the coast.

Last year, a stock assessment by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which regulates migratory fish along the East Coast, concluded that the population of yellow eels was at or near historic lows.

“There is no reason to list them as endangered, the management authority that is in place is adequate,” said Dave Secor, a fisheries biologist with the University of Maryland Center of Environmental Science who chaired the ASMFC’s eel stock assessment. “But I think there is downward trend.” Secor said there was reason to be concerned about potential changes in ocean conditions, which might be affecting larval distribution along the coast. Such changes could account for significant population drops seen in Canada, which is at the northern edge of the species’ distribution. Declines there are especially important because those eels are the largest females in the spawning population, each producing large numbers of eggs. Elsewhere along the coast, Secor said that it’s possible dams are taking a toll by reducing the number of eels reaching many habitats. Many small dams do not totally block upstream movements – some eels can slither around – but their numbers are reduced and eels leaving the water may be subject to increased predation. In addition, large mature eels are thought to suffer high mortality when they migrate downstream to spawn if they pass through turbines at hydroelectric facilities. “You can only accumulate so much mortality,” Secor said.

At its meeting in January, the ASMFC’s Eel Management Board gave the go-ahead to develop management actions aimed at improving the survival of eels during their migration to the ocean. By increasing the number of spawning adults, the hope is that more young eels will make it back into coastal and freshwater areas. Those management actions, which could be finalized this fall, will likely include a mix of seasonal closures, catch size and gear restrictions, and management triggers based on juvenile abundance indices. In addition, the recommendations would likely call for steps to improve eel passages at dams.

Actions are also planned in Canada, where a 99 percent drop in eels migrating through the Upper St. Lawrence River has been seen. Ontario has closed commercial and recreational fisheries, and the Canadian government has set a goal of reducing eel mortality by 50 percent from all sources. “Eels face a gantlet of challenges during their life cycle, with a substantial, we think, cumulative effect,” Rob Macgregor, of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, told the ASMFC. In addition, the Canadian government is supporting efforts to stock eels upstream of dams to boost the spawning population – eels do not determine their sex until later in life and those that move far up freshwater river become almost exclusively females. Moving small glass eels into areas where they are likely to become females could boost the spawning stock – if they survive downstream migrations which often lead through turbines at hydroelectric dams.

In the Chesapeake Bay, which has historically had the largest eel population, fishery officials are moving forward with efforts to give eels a hand getting over the numerous dams that block their migrations to freshwater habitats. In 2003, the first eelway in the watershed was completed by Allegheny Energy Supply at its Millville Dam, the first blockage on the Shenandoah River upstream of the Potomac. Since then, thousands of eels have passed the structure, and last year the company opened an eelway at the next dam, located 45 miles up the river at Warren.

This year, biologists are hoping to win approval for two passages on the Potomac River at Dams 4 and 5, located between Great Falls outside the District of Columbia and the mouth of the Shenandoah. The eelways have to be specifically designed so they don’t clash with the historic masonry structures, which are owned by the National Park Service as part of the Chesapeake and Ohio National Park.

Last summer, federal and state biologists also built the first eel passage in Maryland, which allows eels to pass over a 10-foot-high dam at Unicorn Lake in Queen Anne’s County.

On the Susquehanna, Minkinen suggested that efforts might be considered to move eels upstream, where 43 percent of the potential habitat in the Bay watershed is closed by the Conowingo dam which, unlike some others, is too large for eels to crawl over. “I can’t think of one thing you could do that could potentially have more impact than opening the Susquehanna up to eels,” he said. The river once supported a major eel fishery, and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission had a program to transport eels into the Susquehanna that moved 17 million eels from 1936 through 1980, when it was discontinued because of costs and declining interest in catching eels. But interest is growing in returning eels to the river, in part because of recent research that shows eels are critical for the reproduction of certain important mussel species in the river. “We’re going to be writing it into our management plan on the Susquehanna,” said Mike Hendricks, a fisheries biologist with the commission.

*From: Bay Journal, March 2007*

# One Point of View

## **International Game Fishing Association (IGFA) Opposes Harvest Reductions for the Alaskan Recreational Charter Boat Halibut Fishery.**

Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) is an international fishery shared by both the United States and Canada on the west coast of North America. Because it is a shared resource, it is managed by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), which was founded as a convention between the United States and Canada.

Recently, the IPHC has recommended reducing the daily bag limit of the recreational charter boat fishery from two fish per person per day to one fish per person. There are several reasons why IGFA does not support the IPHC's decision. First and foremost, the current allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors is far from equitable. The commercial halibut fishery, including bycatch and undersized waste, currently harvests nearly 80 million pounds of halibut annually. In contrast, the recreational harvest is approximately 9 million pounds, or roughly 40 % of commercial bycatch and undersized waste alone. Furthermore, the role of organizations, such as the IPHC, is to issue quotas to participating countries, not to define allocation between user groups. Halibut allocation issues in the United States should be under the purview of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Finally, there is no biological data that suggests that halibut are either over fished or undergoing over fishing, especially from the recreational charter boat fishery.

Halibut is one of the most important recreational stocks in Alaska and also a major component of the Alaskan economy, this fishery deserves better management, and IGFA urges the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to develop a fishery management plan for it that will make the halibut fishery pursuant to National Standards dictated in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and also provide equitable allocation between recreational and commercial fisheries.

*From: International Angler 69 (2) March, April 2007*

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## **Hundreds of dead northern hogsuckers found in Shenandoah River**

Scientists baffled by massive spring fish kills on the Shenandoah River over several years now have additional confusing information: several hundred dead fish in December.

An environmentalist counted at least 300 dead northern hogsuckers on a 10-mile stretch of the main branch of the Shenandoah in Clarke and Warren counties in early December, said Don Kain, a state Department of Environmental Quality biologist. An accurate count was impossible because many had sunk the bottom DEQ spokesman Bill Hayden said.

About a dozen more dead fish were found later, but they were of different species and in different parts of the river. Most of them were sunfish except for one smallmouth bass, Kain said. Half were found on the North Fork of the Shenandoah and half on the South Fork.

"That's been the toughest thing about this fish kill," Kain said. "There really aren't any concerted (SIC) patterns."

None of the fish killed recently bore the cigar-burnlike lesions that afflicted fish in previous kills.

Other kills on the river prized by anglers occurred in the spring, but the species have varied. Last spring, northern hogsuckers died on the mainstream Shenandoah of Clarke County, and a number of smallmouth bass and sunfish bearing lesions died on the North Fork.

In 2005, 80 percent of the smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish in the South Fork developed lesions and died. The kill was similar to one in 2004 on the North Fork of the Shenandoah.

Scientists have been unable to determine the cause of the fish kills, and the state's Shenandoah River Fish Kill Task Force that was formed to investigate those kills will look into the recent incidents.

Kain, the task force's co-chairman, said he'll be out on the river looking for fish samples that scientists can study. A fish must still be alive and in distress or freshly dead to be useful to scientists. The fish found so far had been dead for a longer period.

Fish that died in previous kills showed signs of stress, and some males had female characteristics, a condition called "intersex."

Development caused the Shenandoah River to make American Rivers' 10 most endangered waterways this year (2006) for the first time.

*-Associated Press*

*From: Bay Journal, January 2007*

# **Ruling Gives Hope for the Rescue of Lake Okeechobee**

**“Backpumping” Will Now Be Regulated and Restricted.**

Florida’s largest surface drinking water source and the country’s second largest freshwater lake has for years been polluted by pumps that dispose of storm water runoff from gigantic industrial sugar operations and urban areas.

Owing to the contamination from fertilizer and other pollutants, fish and wildlife have been decimated, along with grasses and other flora. Toxic algae blooms periodically deplete oxygen levels and position drinking water supplies. A once-thriving bass fishery is gone.

This unique lake and important part of the Everglades ecosystem has been dying, and state and federal authorities were doing little to bring Lake Okeechobee back to life.

This past December, however, following a three-month trial with scores of expert witnesses, a federal judge ruled that the South Florida Water Management District must now face the fact that years of unabated pumping of polluted water into Lake Okeechobee has taken a huge toll. The judge wrote that this practice violates the Clean Water Act and cannot continue.

The case would have far-reaching implications, in that transfers of polluted water from one water body to another are not confined to Lake Okeechobee. This should prove to be very good news nationwide. Earth-justice attorneys David Gust and Monica Reimer represented the Florida Wildlife Federation in the litigation – Jared Saylor and Tom Turner.

*From: In Brief, Spring 2007*

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## **President Bush Lifts Drilling Ban In Alaska’s Bristol Bay Some Fear Action Could Have Devastating Impact on Region’s Economy, Wildlife**

President Bush announced in January that he is lifting a ban on oil and gas drilling Alaska’s Bristol Bay, which has been protected since 1989 through the Presidential Withdrawal first declared by his father, President George H.W. Bush. Restoring drilling could hurt the region’s economy and wildlife.

The region is home to four national wildlife, refuges, the world’s largest runs of sockeye, salmon, and important herring, crab, halibut and pollock fisheries. It also is home to endangered species including stellar sea lions, humpback and fin whales, and the world’s most endangered whale species, the north Pacific population of northern right whales.

*From: Focus, March-April 2007*

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## **Hope For The Dammed**

While they once were part of the third-largest salmon fishery on the West Coast, the chinook and coho salmon of the Klamath River have been in steady decline ever since the river was dammed more than 80 years ago. Reduced flow and poor water quality, along with the algae and aquatic parasites that thrive in such conditions, have decimated Klamath salmon to 10 percent of their historic numbers.

But in January, the federal agencies charged with licensing four hydropower dams on the river ruled that the dams’ owner, PacifiCorp, must invest \$300 million in fish ladders and screens before its licenses can be renewed. The changes are so expensive that it makes better financial sense for the company to remove the dams and buy market-rate electricity. Government officials estimate that taking down the dams, meeting water-quality regulations, and funding hatchery operations would save ratepayers between \$100 million and \$285 million over 30 years compared with building the ladders.

PacifiCorp officials say they may yet invest in the ladders; they could also appeal the licensing decision. But the data marshaled by government agencies will be hard to dispute, says Steve Rotherth of the conservation group American Rivers. “If they’re going to make a decision that makes sense for their customers, they will remove the dams.”

*Dashka Slater*

*From: Sierra, May-June 2007*

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