

Young Professional Spotlight

Young Professional members of AIFRB represent the next generation of leaders in fisheries science and management. Through *Briefs* and our social media platforms we will be highlighting our Young Professionals as a way to introduce them to the full membership and create opportunities for collaborations. AIFRB's Young Professional Representative, Connor Capizzano (connor.capizzano001@umb.edu), will be showcasing new Young Professionals throughout the year using a series of biographical interviews. This month's Young Professional Spotlight features **Max Murray, Southern California District and Associate Biologist at ECORP Consulting Inc. in Huntington Beach, CA.**

Max Murray – Southern California District



What is your current position, with what company/organization, and what is the focus of your research/work?

I am currently an Associate Biologist at ECORP Consulting Inc. My work for ECORP is generally involved with biological and environmental studies that focus on sensitive environmental resources in southern California. This allows me the opportunities to work with a wide range resources in varying habitats throughout southern California.

Where did you receive your education, and what helped pave your way to your current position?

I graduated from California State University, Long Beach in 2012 with a BS in Marine Biology. I received my MS in Biology from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2019. My research as well as my mentors along the way have been a huge influence for me as a professional biologist. In particular, I was advised to follow my passion and be adaptable which has been crucial in my career.

How does your work apply to, or influence, fishery management (e.g., stock assessments, sportfishing, commercial regulations, habitat protection, etc.)?

Many of the species that I study, both academically and professionally, are of particular interest to governing agencies due to their conservation status and function as essential fish habitat. For example, during my graduate career I studied an introduced population of suckers (*Catostomus santaanae* and *C. fumeiventris*) and arroyo chub (*Gila orcutti*) in the Santa Clara River in Ventura County, California. While all three of these fishes are not protected in the Santa Clara River, they are of special concern in their native drainages due to habitat loss, competition from introduced species, and infectious disease.



What is your professional outlook for fisheries management? In other words, what will the future of fisheries management look like 10-20 years from now. What are we doing correctly, what needs to be improved (e.g., in research, policy, education)?

I am hopeful that fisheries management in the United States will take a more integrative approach in the future. Other than species that are important for aquaculture or recreational stocking programs, little is known about infectious disease in wild fish populations across North America. This is especially true for freshwater fishes which face a myriad of other threats in their native habitats.



What is the importance of young fishery professionals today and for the future of fishery management?

I believe that, as a biologist, perspective is important especially in the highly dynamic field of fisheries management. Young fishery professionals bring new and differing perspectives to the ever-changing challenges in conservation, commercial regulations, and sportfishing that professional fisheries biologists deal with on a regular basis. The quality of the young fisheries professionals in my cohort and the next cohort is inspiring and makes me hopeful for the future of fisheries management.

What drew you to AIFRB, and what does AIFRB do for you and what can it do for other young professionals in this field?

AIFRB has been a society known for its established fisheries researches in southern California and throughout the United States. As a young fisheries biologist, AIFRB gave me an interface with the leading fisheries managers, biologists and consultants in my region. AIFRB was influential in my graduate research by providing travel funds via the Clark Hubbs Research Award. AIFRB provides a community for young professionals to meet, share ideas and network with fisheries managers not just in their region but through North America

Please contact Max (maxdmurray@gmail.com) to continue the conversation!