

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, Mary Blasius (meblasius@gmail.com), will be regularly showcasing a new Young Professional through a series of biographical interviews. This month's Young Professional Spotlight shines on Laura Oremland, Capital District Member and Acting NOAA Citizen Science Coordinator.



Laura Oremland – Capital District Member

Laura Oremland has over 15 years of experience in fisheries science policy. Her career in marine science and fisheries began through a lucky accident. As a college sophomore on summer break from the University of Kentucky she was seeking a job and happened to overhear of an opportunity at the University of South Florida's (USF) Oceanography Camp for Girls, a program designed to interest young women in marine science. She took the job, and found that the camp had interested her in the field.

The following summer she returned to USF to pursue a research project in physical oceanography. Then, in her senior year Laura created a dynamic optimization model to study foraging patterns of the two-spotted goby (*Gobiusculus flavescens*). After completing her Bachelors of Science in mathematics with a minor in biology she went on to the State University of New York at Stony Brook to pursue a Master's degree in marine science. Her research focused on the invasive zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) in the Hudson River and determining which environmental factors best predicted larval abundance and settlement. While there she also assisted with a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation surf clam (*Spisula solidissima*) survey and stock assessment.

In 2002 she received the John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship and came to Silver Spring, Maryland to work in the NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology. She has been with the office ever since and worked in a number of areas over the years, including habitat science, budget and strategic planning, and grants management. She currently manages several education programs including a higher education program designed to help train the next generation of fisheries scientists with strong quantitative skills. One of the roles she is particularly excited to be undertaking is as the Acting NOAA Citizen Science Coordinator with a focus on better understanding how citizen science can contribute to fisheries science and management.