

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 Brendan Runde, North Carolina District and PhD candidate at North Carolina University in Morehead City, NC.

Brendan Runde – North Carolina District



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

I am currently a PhD Candidate at NC State University. I am fortunate to work from our coastal research facility called the Center for Marine Sciences and Technology (CMAST) in Morehead City, NC. My dissertation investigates varying approaches to managing reef fishes, like snappers and groupers, off the US Atlantic coast.

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

I graduated from Virginia Tech in 2013 with BS degrees in Biology and Fisheries Science. I received my MS from NC State in 2017 before immediately matriculating to the PhD program in the same lab group. I credit influential mentors for their encouragement and invaluable advice along the way to my current position; in particular, I was told to carve out a niche in which I was able to work with species and issues of personal interest.

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

The majority of the species that are affected by my research are of current or historical economic importance. One example of the influence of my work is the recent passing of a requirement for descender devices on fishing vessels in the US south Atlantic. My research on the efficacy of these tools to promote survival of released groupers was critical to bringing this issue before the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

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 believe that we are in the adolescent stages of recreational fisheries management in this country. The popularity of recreational fishing has increased mightily in the last several decades, which has dramatically changed fisheries research needs. For example, for fisheries where the releases exceed harvests, quantifying release mortality is of burgeoning importance. Furthermore, estimating recreational fishing statistics has proved challenging, as the number,



locations, and fishing success of recreational vessels is often impossible to determine. I believe that angler education, outreach, and the development of new survey programs will be crucial to strengthening the collection of fisheries data that are vital to management.

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

As with any discipline, the future of fisheries science depends on the young generation. Our perspective is likely to be different from that of those who came before us. For instance, as the climate crisis intensifies, I believe young fishery professionals will lead the way in reshaping management to accommodate for changes. In addition, I believe that our field has problems with recruitment and retention of high-quality individuals. Young professionals in our field must be ambassadors to high school and college students and advocate for them to consider careers in fisheries.



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

I was encouraged to join AIFRB by several other young professional members. Prior to my decision to join, I read the mission statement of AIFRB's website. Upon reading that AIFRB was organized "to promote stewardship, sustainability and wise utilization of natural resources," I was sold: this adequately describes my personal mission statement as well. The resources that AIFRB offers to its members (networking, awards, etc.) are the #1 reason why other young professionals should consider joining.

Please contact Brendan (bjrunde@ncsu.edu) to continue the conversation!