

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 **Alyssa Clevestine, Southern California District and California Sea Grant Fellow at the Port of San Diego in San Diego, CA.**

Alyssa Clevestine – Southern California District



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

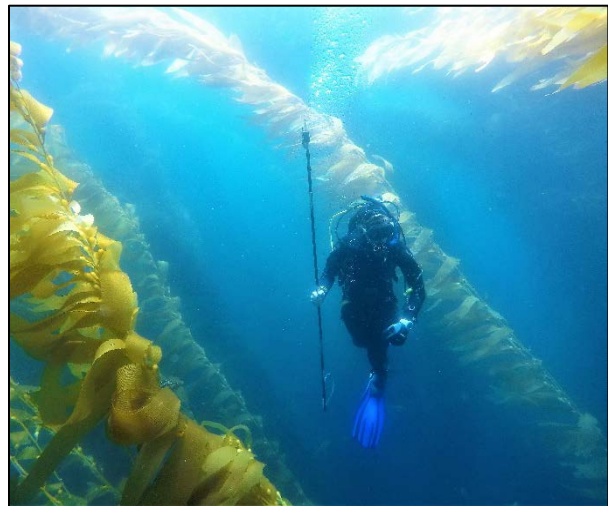
I am a California Sea Grant State Fellow working for the Port of San Diego focusing on coastal planning and policy. The focus of this position is to assist with policy development to support a variety of land and water use projects, conduct environmental reviews of aquaculture and blue technology efforts, and work with stakeholders on sea level rise and adaptation planning in the San Diego area.

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

I earned my Bachelor of Science in Fish and Wildlife Conservation from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and my Master of Science in Biology from California State University Long Beach. My parents and mentors were extremely supportive, hardworking, and adventurous, which I try to emulate and has helped me find jobs and programs that challenge me to grow professionally and personally.

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

My undergraduate research focused on monitoring movement of invasive Asian carp (*Hypophthalmichthys* spp.) within Chicago waterways and was a small part of a larger project to protect native ecosystems and fisheries of the Great Lakes. That work led me to pursue a graduate degree focused on an endangered species, the giant sea bass (*Stereolepis gigas*). After being nearly extirpated from southern California in the 20th century, I used telemetry to quantify temporal and spatial rhythmicity of giant sea bass aggregations at an offshore island to provide a baseline of movement and behavioral data that can be used to improve our understanding of the species and in future management decisions on a state, and potentially international, level.



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)?

Fisheries management continues to grow in this country as a result of more investment in fisheries research and more interest in fish as a food source. I believe much of this stems from educational programming in schools and the media about our rivers, wetlands, lakes, and oceans, and the environmental impacts of what we put on our plates. It is very exciting to live and work in communities that value sustainability in addition to healthy economies and ecosystems, and I believe investment in all-ages education across every social and economic group will improve community investment in fisheries management and build better researchers and more informed consumers.



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

The future of fishery management is dependent on the quality and diversity of ideas from young professionals across many fields. It is exciting to see young folks from around the world using new tools and introducing different perspectives that drive research and development in fisheries and climate research. By creating more opportunities to get students involved in fisheries from a young age we will be able to develop more well-rounded managers, scientists, and policy makers that use their diversity as a strength.

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

Having been involved in AFS as an undergraduate, I knew the value of society membership and mentorship. Upon entering graduate school, I joined AIFRB to get a better understanding of some of the research going on in my local area and to learn more about the variety of work available to fisheries scientists. It has been a great experience to meet and learn from so many different people throughout southern California and Baja, as well as receive support through awards, networking, and professional development, all of which are reasons why other young professionals should join AIFRB.

Please contact Alyssa (aclevenstine@gmail.com) to continue the conversation!