

# TIDEWATER PRESS

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
TIDEWATER CHAPTER OF THE  
AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

Winter 2014

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## President's Corner | *Mike Wilberg*

The recent bouts of cold weather have me thinking about what environmental variability (and climate change) mean for the species we study and manage. Of course, many of us study how populations and communities respond to these shocks to the system. In this way nature is constantly providing us with natural experiments, which offers both opportunities and challenges. The opportunity is that we are able to observe how a system responds to a novel set of conditions; the challenge—and it's a big one—is that we have no control over the experiment and the exact conditions will never be replicated. The latter means that it is difficult to determine causation from correlational studies.

Fish and invertebrate populations are not the only ones that need to respond to shocks in the environment.



The fishers, anglers, and management systems for our fisheries must also be able to weather and respond to changes. Although change is ubiquitous, many fishery management systems are not particularly well designed to respond to fluctuations. Management systems tend to be pretty conservative by nature

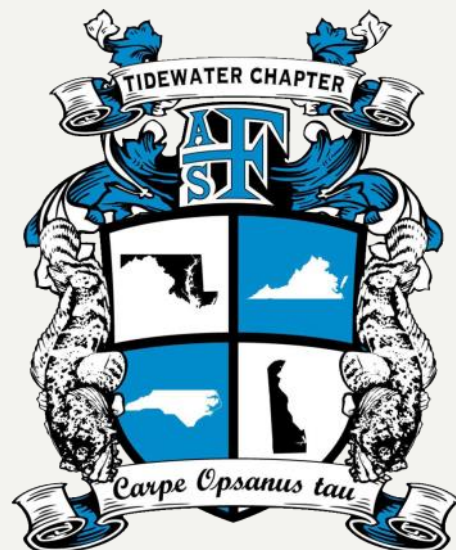
and often require a substantial shock to induce change. Some of the problems involve long deliberation times required to change rules, and a substantial amount of evidence is usually necessary for stakeholders to advocate for change. While the amount of inertia in management systems probably helps to reduce variability to fishers and anglers, it can create problems when large changes in the population happen relatively quickly or when new understanding suggests that a management response is necessary.

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*President's Corner, continued  
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Do these challenges mean that understanding how our fishery resources respond to changes in the environment is futile? While it can sometimes seem this way, we are steadily making progress in improving our understanding of the species and systems we work on. Although it is often quipped that all this uncertainty translates to job security, it also means that there

will always be new and interesting results and hypotheses to share with our colleagues. For me, this is the main benefit of AFS – providing a place to discuss our latest findings and get feedback that will help hone and shape our thoughts. So, when it's cold outside like today, I find myself thinking fondly of the upcoming Tidewater Chapter meeting in Newport News, Virginia. I hope you are too, and I look forward to seeing you there.



## Treasurer's Report | *Stephanie McInerny*

The current checking account balance includes payments to cover initial costs for the 2014 Annual Meeting (\$1089.95 to cover deposits for food and venue during the Saturday night dinner social and the 1st month of access to the registration page) as well as liability insurance for the Chapter (\$150), new gavel plaques for past presidents (\$648), and a donation to the South Carolina Chapter of AFS for the Southern Division meeting (\$500).

Annual chapter dues for 2014 are \$10.00. If you are not currently a member

of the Chapter but would like to join, a membership form can be found on the Chapter website or you can email me at [Stephanie.McInerny@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Stephanie.McInerny@ncdenr.gov). A lifetime membership is available for a onetime fee of \$150.00. Checks should be sent to:

**Stephanie McInerny**  
TWC Secretary/Treasurer  
209 Brigantine Ct.  
Cape Carteret, NC 28584

*Please make checks payable to: "Tidewater Chapter AFS."*

### Current Financial Report

Checking:	\$12,801.30
Mutual Fund:	\$ 1,518.11
Total:	\$14,319.41

## Get updates via the Chapter *LISTSERV*



### TO SUBSCRIBE

E-mail to: [LISTSERV@LISTSERV.ECU.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@LISTSERV.ECU.EDU) and enter SUBSCRIBE TIDEWAFS in the body of the e-mail.

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# 2014 Tidewater Chapter Annual Meeting

## March 21-23, 2014

*Join us for the 28th annual Tidewater Chapter meeting! This year will be hosted by President-elect, Jessica Thompson in Newport News, Virginia.*



The meeting will begin with an optional continuing education course, Comparing and Selecting Growth Models, on Friday afternoon on the campus of Christopher Newport University (CNU). You may sign up for the continuing education course when you register for the meeting.

The poster social will be held Friday evening at CNU; food and drink will be provided. Oral presentations will commence Saturday morning at CNU and continue through the day, concluding with the always exciting chapter business meeting and presentation of awards.

The Saturday dinner social will be held at the world-renowned Mariners' Museum, adjacent to CNU campus. Food will be provided by Smoke BBQ, winner of Hampton Road Magazine's award for Best Barbeque in 2013, and the museum will be open for touring. Oral presentations will resume at CNU on Sunday morning, and the meeting will conclude at noon.

A new addition to the meeting this year will be a job board set up outside the meeting room to advertise available graduate student positions and employment opportunities. Please consider advertising positions open in your lab or agency, including summer technician positions that may be of interest to CNU undergraduates attending the meeting.

### DEADLINES:

- Early registration: Feb. 14
- Abstract submission: Feb. 14
- Hotel group rate: Feb. 21

### COSTS:

- Early registration (includes all days and socials)
  - Student: \$60
  - Professional: \$100
- Hotel group rate: \$109/night

### HOTEL:

- Newport News Marriott at City Center
  - 740 Town Center Dr., Newport News, Virginia
  - 866-329-1758

To register, visit the meeting website at <http://www.sdafs.org/tidewater/AFSTidewater/AnnualMeeting.html>

Additional meeting information will be sent by email to meeting registrants in late February. Please contact Jessica Thompson at (757) 594-7307 with questions about the meeting or problems with registration.

## North Carolina State Update | *Paul Rudershausen*

### North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission Coastal Recreational Fishing License Grant Awards

Revenues from the North Carolina Coastal Recreational Fishing License will pay toward projects to help provide coastal fishing access and fisheries and habitat research. The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission approved 14 grants, totaling \$1.78 million, for the 2014 cycle.

Grants that fall under the People Focus Area include public education and public water access projects. Grants that fall under the Fish Focus Area are fisheries research projects. Grants that fall under the Habitat Focus Area are projects that enhance, protect or research fisheries habitat. Fish focus grants this funding cycle include:

1. *North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF), Multispecies Tagging Program:* Multi-year grant to tag striped bass, red drum, spotted seatrout, and southern flounder, which will provide independent estimates of abundance and biomass, as well as data on migration rate.
2. *NCDMF, Carcass Collection Program:* Multi-year grant to continue funding a coast-wide carcass collection program
3. *North Carolina State University, Stock Structure of Spotted Seatrout: Assessing Genetic Connectivity at Northern Latitudinal Limits:* Multi-year grant to study population structure of spotted seatrout, which will allow researchers to accurately delineate stock boundaries.
4. *East Carolina University,*

*Maturation and Fecundity of the Central Southern Management Area Striped Bass Stock:*

One-year grant to continue research on striped bass and provide NCDMF and Wildlife Resources Commission with the ability to differentiate between the wild and hatchery reared striped bass stock.

5. *University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Estimating Mortality for Southern Flounder Using Combined Telemetry and Conventional Tagging Approach:* Multi-year grant to tag southern flounder providing data to be incorporated directly into future stock assessments.

### Project Healing Waters to give veterans fishing opportunities


Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Inc. has 159 programs in 47 states and a mission to "physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing."

The program accepts those with a Veterans Administration disability rating of 0 to 100 percent, the combat wounded, and people who are looking for therapy or an adjustment to civilian life.

Various chapters throughout the nation are seeking volunteers, military and civilian, who want to teach the arts of fly tying and fly fishing to new members across the country.



Paul Rudershausen releasing a sea turtle in Onslow Bay. Photo by Jeffrey A. Buckel

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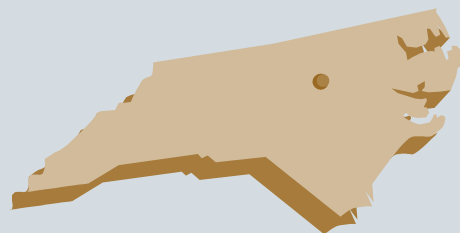
*North Carolina, continued***North Carolina Sea Grant accepting applications for 2015 Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship**

The one-year program places graduate students in Washington, D.C., to work on federal policies and processes affecting ocean, coastal and Great Lakes issues. Recipients will receive a \$45,000 stipend. Reimbursement for health insurance, work-related travel and relocation expenses also are provided, up to a total award maximum of \$56,500. The fellowship starts on Feb. 1, 2015. The program honors John A.

Knauss, a Sea Grant founder, NOAA administrator and former dean of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography.

North Carolina Sea Grant will nominate students from graduate or professional programs in marine and aquatic science or policy, regardless of citizenship. Students must be enrolled in a North Carolina academic institution at the time of application deadline. Up to six candidates will be nominated to the National Sea Grant Office for final selection.

Applications must be received by **5 PM, Feb 14 2014**. North Carolina Sea Grant will conduct face-to-face interviews mid-March in Raleigh. For more information, contact Sara Mirabilio by phone at 252-475-5488 or email her at [saram@csi.northcarolina.edu](mailto:saram@csi.northcarolina.edu). Or visit the fellowship website at [seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/KnaussFellowship.aspx](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/KnaussFellowship.aspx).

**Maryland State Update | Bob Murphy****Atlantic Sturgeon**


Beginning September 2013, Chesapeake scientists at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are embarking on coordinated research to discover how Atlantic sturgeon persist and even flourish in

Chesapeake Bay waters. As recently as 15 years ago, many fisheries scientists had concluded that sturgeons were extirpated in the Chesapeake Bay but were subsequently proven wrong by evidence of reproduction in the James and York River, and increasing encounters with sturgeons by watermen and others on the water. The news of stable and even growing sturgeon populations in the Chesapeake Bay is puzzling also in that lab studies show that sturgeons are among the most sensitive species to the low oxygen that pervades much of the Bay during summer and fall months.

The goal of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative is to understand why

sturgeons persist and even grow in abundance in one of the most stressed estuarine systems in the United States. Through support by the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Resources Division, a team of Virginia and Maryland state and university scientists seek to evaluate essential reproductive, nurseries, and feeding habitats in the Chesapeake Bay. Understanding the where's, when's, and how's of sturgeon habitat-use in the Chesapeake will not only help to identify factors critical to their recovery here, but elsewhere in their range.

More information at <http://fishconnectivity.cbl.umces.edu/research/CSI>

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## *Maryland, continued*

### **Oyster Poaching**

In one of the largest oyster cases in recent years, the Maryland Natural Resources Police, on Wednesday, January 15, arrested a Virginia truck driver and seized a tractor-trailer filled with oysters, many of them undersized.

Rhoderick J. Newman, 66, of Tappahannock, was charged with one count of attempting to transport undersized oysters out of state and five counts of possession of undersized and unculled oysters. The maximum fine for the offense is \$1,000 per bushel.

"There is no excuse for any amount of oyster poaching, let alone what happened here. A blatant disregard for our fishery is a slap in the face to responsible watermen, and all Marylanders," said Department of Natural Resources Secretary Joseph P. Gill. "I want to congratulate our officers, and entire team, for a job well done."

Acting on a tip, officers pulled over the truck, which was westbound on U.S. 50 in Easton. The truck was directed to a parking lot for a cargo inspection. Officers found that the truck contained 188 bushels of oysters. Working by the light of their vehicle headlights, 17 officers and cadets measured every oyster, an operation that lasted more than six hours. All but one of the bushels contained oysters below the legal minimum of three inches. The percentage of undersized oysters in each bushel ranged from

six percent to 46 percent.

Maryland law allows a five-percent tolerance.

The tractor-trailer load represents the daily limit of 16 oystermen power dredging and is worth more than \$8,000, according to the Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Service. The approximately 50 bushels of undersized oysters, which filled the bed of a one-ton pick-up truck, were separated from the legal cargo and returned to an Eastern Shore oyster sanctuary.

This is the halfway point of Maryland's six-month oyster harvesting season, a time when poachers tend to seek out undersized oysters to make up for the increasing scarcity of the resource. Since the start of the season in October, NRP has been conducting saturation patrols by boat and aerial surveillance from Maryland State Police helicopters with long-range cameras. In addition, the agency is making full use of its newest tool, a system of radar units and cameras called the Maritime Law Enforcement Information Network (MLEIN) which allows officers to track vessels and "see" over the horizon. The 2010 Oyster Restoration and Aquaculture Development Plan, fostered by Governor Martin O'Malley, contains a robust enforcement component to protect the resource, habitat and sanctuaries.

### **Oyster Reefs**

The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO), together with partners, has initiated the Oyster Reef Ecosystem Services (ORES) project to quantify the benefits restored oyster reefs provide to other species and the environment. This includes field work to determine what species are present on oyster reefs before, during, and after oyster restoration work; economic analysis to place dollar values on these services; and funding research at leading academic institutions to further improve understanding of the suite of services oyster reefs deliver to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

In July through November 2013, NCBO carried out four rounds of "baseline" fish sampling on the Tred Avon River on Maryland's Eastern Shore—like Harris Creek, a tributary of the Choptank River in what is termed the "Choptank Complex." The intent of this science was to determine what kinds and how many fish and other Bay species were in the waters in the Tred Avon River, where a large-scale oyster restoration project will begin in early 2014. NCBO will continue research as restoration progresses to track changes in how fish, crabs, and others use the area. In addition, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is also providing water-quality data that will be correlated with fish sampling results and used to track changes over time.

## Virginia State Update | *Kevin Spanik*

### A Shell of a Year for Virginia Oysters

Governor Bob McDonnell announced that Virginia's most recent oyster harvest has greatly exceeded recent years, reaching the highest level since 1987. The 2012-2013 harvest of 406,000 bushels was also 60 percent greater than just one year prior. The harvest boom came from both wild-caught oysters and from dramatically increased yields in oyster aquaculture operations on privately leased water bottoms.

VMRC



### New Virginia State Record Bigeye Tuna

A 311-pound bigeye tuna, caught on September 25th by Vic Gaspeny of Tavernier, Florida has been certified as the new Virginia State Record by the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament. Gaspeny's catch surpasses the existing record of 285 pounds and 12 ounces, caught 10 years earlier in August 2003 by Melvin Bray of Dumfries, Virginia. Gaspeny made his record-setting catch off Virginia Beach, at the Norfolk Canyon, while fishing with Captain Justin Wilson aboard the charter vessel *Just Right*.

It was nearly sunset when the huge bigeye hit a trolled ballyhoo rigged on a blue and white skirt attached to a heavy leader. The

311-pound record-setting bigeye tuna measured 79-1/2 inches in total length, 71-1/2 inches straight line fork length and sported an impressive 57-inch girth. The tuna was weighed and registered at Long Bay Pointe Marina.

VMRC



## University of Maryland Chesapeake Biological Laboratory Student Subunit Update | *Alex Atkinson*

The Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (CBL) welcomed three new fisheries students this fall: Cara Simpson, Suzan Shahrestani and Brian Gallagher. And a special congratulations to Mike O'Brien on his successful thesis defense!

Cara Simpson and Brian Gallagher served as student representatives at Patuxent River Appreciation Days at the Calvert Marine Museum on October 12-13th in Solomons, Maryland.

Activities and information at the CBL booth included live blue crab display, hands-on ROV tank and a display on oil dispersants.

At the 22nd Biennial Meeting of the Coastal Estuarine Research Federation in San Diego, three CBL students presented their research - all work done on blue crabs in Chesapeake Bay. Sarah Rains shared her work on the effects of sex ratio on potential sperm limitation and future stock

abundance in blue crab of Chesapeake Bay. Danielle Zaveta presented her talk titled, "The use of RNA:DNA ratios as an indicator of nutritional condition in juvenile blue crabs" and Cara Simpson spoke about her project on modeling blue crab growth in the Chesapeake Bay. Congratulations to Cara for being awarded the 1st place award for best undergraduate oral presentation!

## East Carolina University Student Subunit Update | *Dan Zurlo*



The ECU AFS student subunit had both a productive summer and fall in 2013. In mid-July, members Dan Zurlo, Evan Knight, Tyler Peacock, and Jillian Osborne volunteered as observers for the annual Oriental,

North Carolina Rotary Club Tarpon Tournament. As observers, they recorded each fish that was caught. They went out with crews and fished at the mouth of the Neuse River and in the Pamlico Sound. Tarpon are few and far between in the Pamlico and catching just one fish over the course of weekend of fishing is noteworthy. Of the boats ECU AFS members were on, only Jillian's crew was able to catch a fish, and they caught two! This was enough for her crew to take first place in the competition.

During the fall, ECU AFS held a few events. We participated in the Greenville Big Sweep, a program run by the city of Greenville in which ECU and other city organizations remove trash. ECU AFS was tasked with cleaning Green Mill Run, and small stream running



The exec council at Big Sweep. From left to right: Dan Zurlo, Evan Knight, Zach Gillum, Nick Tolopka, Jillian Osborne, and Tyler Peacock. Photo courtesy of ECU AFS subunit.



Tarpon on! (above) They sure do put up a fight (below). Photos by Jillian Osborne.

through campus. ECU members and other student volunteers removed copious amounts of trash from the stream. Perhaps the most unique item collected was digital locking safe that had been cut open.

October saw members of ECU AFS hold a fishing excursion to Oriental, North Carolina. There, members introduced undergraduates interested in pursuing fisheries and marine biology to various sampling techniques used to sample fish and environmental parameters. Undergraduates learned to beach seine, trawl, and rod and reel fish.



## Duke University Student Subunit Update | *Ana Griefen*

DukeFish began the school year in a frenzy planning our annual booth for the North Carolina Seafood Festival Oct. 4-6<sup>th</sup>. Our fish taco stand has grown in popularity over the years, as one of the few non-profit vendors selling exclusively local, sustainable seafood from the Carteret County

fishermen of the Walking Fish cooperative. Thanks to the support of Walking Fish, Fishtowne, and the Duke Marine Lab, we raised enough funds to support our subunit for the rest of the year. Our efforts throughout the festival were featured on the local news!

Continuing our outreach and support of local seafood, we held an oyster bake for the Duke community in Durham, North Carolina. Bringing a bit of the coast to main campus, we were able to inform fellow students about miraculous bivalves and the benefits of shellfish aquaculture and fill their stomachs!

We look forward to plunging into the spring semester with a sea of possibilities from fishing and diving trips to an aquaculture symposium and ocean awareness week! Inquiries can be emailed to Ana Griefen at

[ana.griefen@duke.edu](mailto:ana.griefen@duke.edu).

Duke University students from the Nicholas School of the Environment learning about and enjoying farmed oysters from the North Carolina coast. Photo by Kim Hernandez



## Tidewater Chapter Student Awards

### Eileen Setzler-Hamilton Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship award is given periodically to an outstanding graduate student who currently is in school and has displayed a commitment to excellence in research, education, professional endeavors, and public/community service.

Applications are being accepted for the Eileen Setzler-Hamilton Memorial Scholarship. The deadline for applications is February 14, 2014. Applications can be downloaded from <http://www.sdafs.org/tidewater/AFSTidewater/Awards.html> below the Eileen Setzler-Hamilton Memorial Scholarship heading.

### Student Oral and Poster Presentation Awards

First, second, and third place awards are given to the best student oral and poster presentations based on judge evaluations. To view oral and poster presentation requirements and judgment criteria, visit <http://www.sdafs.org/tidewater/AFSTidewater/AnnualMeeting.html> and click the links below *Student Paper Awards*.

## *AFS Tidewater Chapter Executive Committee*

**President:** Mike Wilberg

**President-Elect/ Program Committee**

**Chair:** Jessica Thompson

**Past President/ Nominating Committee**

**Chair:** Jacob Boyd

**Treasurer/ Secretary:** Stephanie McInerny

**At-Large Members**

**North Carolina:** Paul Ruderhausen

**Virginia:** Kevin Spanik

**Maryland:** Bob Murphy

**Student subunit presidents**

**Duke:** Ana Griefen

**ECU:** Nick Tolopka & Zach Gillum

**UMCES CBL:** Danielle Zaveta

**UMES:** inactive

**UNCW:** inactive

**Awards & Scholarship Committee Chair:**

Ron Klauda

**Webmaster:** Chad Smith

**Newsletter Editor:** Cory Janiak

## **2014 AFS Annual Meeting Heads to Québec City!**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Northeastern Division, the Atlantic International Chapter and the Canadian Aquatic Resources Section of the American Fisheries Society (AFS), cordially invite you to attend the 144th Annual Meeting that will be held in Québec City from 17 to 21 August 2014.

Located on the bank of the St. Lawrence River, Québec is one of the world's most beautiful cities. The area's European appeal and North American lifestyle, complete with a storied history, thriving art scene, and vibrant French-speaking culture, make it truly one of a kind.

The "Joie de Vivre" and hospitality of Québec City's people is part of everyday life. Wherever you go, you'll be welcomed with open arms, and the proverbial warmth for which Québec City is famous.

A hop, skip and jump from downtown, visitors are already in another world – there's a whole outdoor playground to discover. Talk about nirvana for sports enthusiasts! In town or in the great outdoors, a pair of walking shoes will take you far.

**Abstracts for contributed papers and poster papers must be received by 14 February 2014.** Visit <http://afs2014.org/call-for-papers/> for more information.

DE LA RECHERCHE À LA GESTION DES PÊCHES:  
PENSER ET AGIR LOCALEMENT ET GLOBALEMENT

FROM FISHERIES RESEARCH TO MANAGEMENT:  
THINK AND ACT LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

QUÉBEC  
2014



**144<sup>e</sup>** RÉUNION ANNUELLE, 17 au 21 AOÛT 2014  
ANNUAL MEETING, AUGUST 17-21



AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY