



## AFS Estuaries Section Newsletter Fall 2012

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### SECTION NEWS

#### President's Message

I was fortunate to spend at least a few days at the AFS annual meeting in St. Paul this year, attending the AFS Governing Board retreat, the AFS Governing Board meeting, and the Estuaries Section business meeting.

The AFS governing board retreat addressed challenges facing professional associations today, including effective governance through streamlined governing boards and provision of relevant services to members. The AFS governing board retreat revealed that AFS finances were still in good shape, although there has been a downturn in book sales. The governing board also discussed the upcoming search for a new AFS Executive Director.

Our section's business meeting was also a success. I was able to meet section members who seemed interested in helping out with Section activities in the future, which was very heartening. Minutes from the business meeting are reprinted in this newsletter.

I also presented student travel awards to three talented individuals, including Augustin Engman, whose research is highlighted in this issue. I

### Issue Highlights

#### **SECTION NEWS**

President's Message  
2012 Business Meeting Minutes  
Treasurer's Report  
Nancy Foster Habitat Award

#### **FEATURE ARTICLE**

Tropical Island Stream Fish Assemblages

#### **2013 AFS SYMPOSIUM PROPOSAL**

#### **MEETING NEWS**

13<sup>th</sup> Flatfish Biology Conference, Westbrook, CT  
AFS 2013, Little Rock, AR  
Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA

#### **OTHER NEWS**

AFS Resource Policy Committee

have to again comment the generous support of the Southern Association of Marine Laboratories for continuing to support Estuaries Section student travel awards.

I had to leave the meeting before our Section's symposium on habitat restoration projects funded by the American Recovery Act. President-Elect Abigail Franklin did a super job presenting and moderating the symposium. We have another great symposium in the works for Little Rock, Arkansas, in 2013, and you can read about that in this issue as well.

The Estuaries Section should have a productive 2013, and I encourage anyone reading this to consider running for President-Elect when we hold elections in early 2013. Please let me know if you are interested!

--Lee Benaka, President, Estuaries Section

### 2012 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

#### **1. Call to Order, Introductions**

President Lee Benaka asked all attendees to introduce themselves and sign the sign in sheet.

## 2. Presentation of Student Travel Awards

Estuaries Section Award Winner—Michelle (Mick) Walsh – University of New Hampshire

Southern Association of Marine Laboratories  
Winners—

Augustin (Gus) Engman – North Carolina State  
University

Michael Lowe – University of Southern  
Mississippi

## 3. Presentation of Special Service

Steve Jordan accepted the past president award on behalf of Fred Genthner, who was not able to attend the meeting.

## 4. Nancy Foster Award

President Benaka gave an update on changes in the awarding of the Nancy Foster award. For 2012, the award was made to three people at a ceremony at NOAA Fisheries headquarters in Silver Spring, MD. The recipients gave talks as part of the award ceremony.

## 5. Old Business

President Benaka referenced a written report that was submitted to the AFS Governing Board.

President Benaka announced that he and President-Elect Abigail Franklin organized and are moderating an Estuaries Section-sponsored symposium titled, “Fish Habitat and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009”. The symposium will take place on Thursday August 23 at 1:15PM.

President Benaka reported that Secretary Lynn Waterhouse created a Section Facebook page.

President Benaka also reported that two Estuaries Section newsletters were written and sent out to the membership via email, and posted on the new Facebook page.

## 6. Treasurer’s Report

President Benaka read through the report submitted by Treasurer Anthony Overton.

## 7. New Business

President Benaka reported on the Governing Board meeting and retreat that he attended before the AFS Annual meeting began.



**Lee Benaka with Travel Award winner Gus Engman**

The speaker at the retreat gave a talk called “Race for Relevance.” The speaker summarized the six pressures on professional societies:

1. Time famine and the need to use volunteer time more efficiently
2. Maximum return on dues – a society should offer clear value
3. Specilaization
4. Generational values – in general it takes too much time for young people to reach leadership role
5. For-profit competition – e.g., in continuing education
6. Technology – keeping up on trends

President Benaka also reported on issues discussed at the Governing Board meeting:

- One of issues discussed was the size of the Governing Board (32). The consultant-speaker advocated for a 5-member Governing Board.
- Empowering the AFS Executive Director and staff to make sure they have the right skills to lead.
- The Governing Board’s upcoming search for a new Executive Director.
- Technology – we need to make sure that AFS keeps up with trends and puts the right amount of resources towards using technology.
- The AFS Budget for the Annual Meeting relates more to sponsorship than attendance.
- Minnesota has approximately 1,500 people in attendance, Seattle was 4,000.
- Book sales are down, and Executive

Director Rassam wants to move towards downloading of chapters rather than physical books.

President Benaka asked for ideas for Estuaries Section activities. Is there any training needed? Should we involve ourselves with policy efforts?

President Benaka reported that he spoke with Kyle Hartman, President of Habitat Section, about collaborating on some continuing education or training courses

The Estuaries Section is a sponsor of the NOAA Habitat Blueprint symposium on Wednesday.

President Benaka opened the floor to ideas for Symposia in Little Rock, Arkansas in 2013

AFS President-Elect John Boreman reported that the theme for his presidency is "Challenges for the Future Ahead." He asked members to think futuristically, and about how to train new professionals.

Steve Jordan thought that some 2013 symposium ideas could come from the NOAA Habitat Blueprint session.

An Estuaries section member suggested contacting someone from the new administration to discuss ideas for fisheries. He gave the example of a recent news article that gave Romney and Obama a chance to express their views on fisheries. Obama answered the questions, and Romney declined to send any information.

An Estuaries section member suggested reaching out to people working in "underdeveloped" countries on estuaries issues. Estuaries section could be a resource for issues, like what to do when you are asked for on baseline information about fisheries when you have no budget to collect the information, and the government is asking for comments on development plans. He suggested the estuaries section could put together a manual on what needs to be done to evaluate environmental impacts. John Boreman commented that the next president's (Bob Hughes) theme is going to be global fisheries. He wants to discuss more ideas like this. An Estuaries section member commented that some international development banks require environmental statements, but

they are often ignored.

President Benaka encouraged people to send him emails with any ideas for symposia.

President Benaka announced the Estuaries Section website will be revamped by Anthony Overton. He asked for pictures or videos to help spruce up the site and ideas for really short articles.

President Benaka will look at the bylaws to learn more about Division representation. This could help us to be more connected with different parts of AFS.

President Benaka asked if anyone else had comments or ideas.

Steve Jordan reminded members that the Estuaries and Marine Fisheries sections worked together to create the online Marine Fisheries Issue. He encouraged people to check it out and reported that it has an impact factor of 1.3. He stated that we should be proud of this work. President Benaka asked whether the Fisheries Forum has worked. Steve reported that the idea was for people to use it as a place to discuss issues together – but there has not been much traffic on that part of the site.

An Estuaries section member suggested creating a LinkedIn page, which is easier to use for professional contacts than Facebook.

President Benaka will ask the travel award recipients to write a short piece about their research, and will post them on the website.

Adjourned at 6:40PM.

At 7:23PM President Benaka re-opened meeting so Tom Bigford, NOAA NMFS could give an update on the Nancy Foster award. Tom reported that NOAA NMFS has collaborated for 10 years with the Estuaries Section. This year the format of the award was changed and was changed from one recipient to several recipients. It was given to Stan Moberly, Bob Hoffman, and Robin Bruckner. They presented the awards in Silver Spring so the award ceremony is not rushed to stay within the time frame of the Estuaries Section business meeting. Tom will send out an email for the Nancy Foster award.

President Benaka presented a Special Service Award to Tom Bigford.

Adjourned (again) at 7:40PM

--**Abigail Franklin, President-Elect, Estuaries Section**

If you have any questions, please contact Tom Bigford at 301/427-8630 or [thomas.bigford@noaa.gov](mailto:thomas.bigford@noaa.gov) or Brenda Rupli at 301/427-8647 or [Brenda.Rupli@noaa.gov](mailto:Brenda.Rupli@noaa.gov).

--**Lee Benaka, President, Estuaries Section**

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Starting Balance (8/31/2011)    **\$1,634.23**

#### Income

- Contribution from NOAA    \$2,500.00
- Contribution from Southern Association of Marine Laboratories for Student Travel Awards    \$1,000.00

Total income:    **\$3,500.00**

#### Expenses

- 2011 Travel Awards    \$1,500.00
- 2011 Annual Meeting expenses    \$ 378.00
- Reimbursement to Marine Fisheries Section for 2011 Annual Meeting expenses    \$ 500.00

Total expenses:    **\$2,378.00**

Balance on Hand (7/31/2012)    **\$2,756.23**

--**Anthony Overton, Treasurer, Estuaries Section**

### NANCY FOSTER HABITAT AWARD

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2012 Dr. Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award. The deadline is January 18, 2013.

I invite you to nominate candidates deserving recognition for their accomplishments, commitment, and excellent service to marine habitat conservation. This is an excellent opportunity to acknowledge heroes working in policy, management, science, education, or other related fields.

Nomination forms and information are available at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/partners/nancyfosteraward.html>



### FEATURE ARTICLE

#### **Tropical Island Stream Fish Assemblages**

by Augustin (Gus) Engman  
North Carolina State University  
Raleigh, NC  
[gusengman@gmail.com](mailto:gusengman@gmail.com)

I was very pleased to win a Travel Award this year from the Estuaries Section and the Southern Association of Marine Laboratories. Estuaries Section President Lee Benaka asked me to share my research interests in this newsletter.

In general I am interested in answering research questions about tropical island stream fish assemblages. These assemblages are unique because they are dominated by diadromous species in the middle and upper reaches of rivers; and a mix of euryhaline and diadromous species near the river mouth or estuary. In the tropics most of the diadromous species are amphidromous. In the amphidromous life cycle adults live and spawn in the freshwater of the river and eggs or larvae float downstream to a higher salinity environment where they spend their larval phase, later, post-larvae recruit to a river mouth. My desire to study the insular fish

assemblages of the tropics stems from the fact that they are highly threatened, little is known about their ecology, and they are an important resource for people who live in this region of the world.

The main focus of my current research is to learn about the recruitment dynamics of amphidromous fishes and the importance of amphidromous recruitment for riverine ecology and fisheries on the island of Puerto Rico. Studies from other islands show that amphidromous fish fecundity is usually very high and that amphidromous fish recruit to estuaries en masse at specific times, often in relation to the lunar cycle. I am currently determining the timing of amphidromous fish recruitment to Puerto Rico's estuaries. This summer I conducted a study where I sampled post-larval amphidromous recruits over multiple lunar cycles, tides, river flows and times of day to determine if these factors are related to the timing of recruitment episodes.



### **A post-larval amphidromous fish, *Eleotris perniger***

Recruitment episodes could have important effects on estuarine sport fisheries and ecosystem structure by serving as forage for euryhaline predators such as Snook and Tarpon. One of my future research objectives is to determine if there are changes in the fish assemblages of the estuaries of Puerto Rico in response to amphidromous recruitment episodes, and to determine if amphidromous post-larvae are an important nutrient and energy input to the estuarine food web. Amphidromous post-larvae (called cetí in Puerto Rico) are also important as an artisanal fishery in themselves. These fish are captured during recruitment episodes in Puerto Rico (and in other tropical localities around the world) and are an important food source with high economic and cultural values.

However, this food source could be contaminated

due to anthropogenic impacts. Puerto Rico has an extremely high human population density and is highly urbanized, and since estuaries are endpoints for urban contaminants, which may accumulate over time, post-larval recruits are potential vectors for delivery of those contaminants to the human communities that consume them as well as to higher trophic levels of aquatic food webs. Another research goal of mine will be to determine contaminant concentrations in the tissues of post-larval recruits. The high human density also exerts substantial pressure on water supplies, and lotic water withdrawals may negatively affect recruitment. An overall goal of my dissertation will be to determine how amphidromous fish recruitment is affected by anthropogenic impacts. The information from my research will be provided to the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and NOAA Marine Fisheries, so that they may improve the conservation and management of estuarine and riverine resources on the island of Puerto Rico.

### **2013 AFS SYMPOSIUM PROPOSAL**

Tom Bigford of the NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation is heading up an effort to propose a very interesting symposium for the 2013 AFS Annual Meeting. The draft meeting proposal is below. The Estuaries Section plans to sponsor the symposium. Please contact Tom or one of the other co-organizers listed below if you would like to make a presentation as part of this symposium.

Symposium title:  
Ecosystem Connections: Watershed Health, Anadromous Species, and Ocean Production

Organizers:  
Thomas E. Bigford  
NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service  
Office of Habitat Conservation  
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**Description:**

This symposium will build on the growing body of knowledge documenting the importance of healthy coastal watersheds in supporting ocean populations of highly valued fish stocks. Our goal is to investigate those connections, using anadromous fish as primary integrators for ecological and economic benefits. Two symposia at AFS 2012 connected land, water, forage, and fisheries. In 2013, we will delve further by focusing on how specific riverine and estuarine stocks support important offshore populations. Our objective is to link science and management, with those working on either side of our coasts recognizing the value of their separate contributions. Those connections will clarify future actions to strengthen the collective efforts of AFS members and meeting participants to make solid decisions affecting living resources.

Food chains are among the most visible and tenuous measures of ecosystem health. Healthy and productive populations of river herring, shad, and other anadromous species are crucial for productive stocks of offshore fish species. More specifically, sufficient riverine and estuarine habitat will support ocean populations of valued commercial and recreational fish. Comparable ecological and economic connections occur within estuaries, where resident finfish such as menhaden and shellfish such as oysters provide similar benefits to species such as striped bass and bluefish.

Presentations by experts from all sides of this timely issue will help us understand the ecological and economic links between coastal watersheds and our oceans. This symposium will have an international flavor bolstered by insights from Europe and North America provided through regional case studies and investigations.



**Potential presentation topics –**

- Ecosystem connections, including how finfish and shellfish in coastal watersheds are essential to healthy offshore stocks.
- Historical review, including how pre-exploitation ecosystems with healthy forage supported much larger fish populations.
- Offshore trends, such as how biomass for offshore stocks is affected by reduced forage, and how the numbers have changed since European settlement.
- Landings records, including the implications to recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Habitat threats, with an emphasis on those that limit key species and might offer opportunities to apply this knowledge.
- Opportunities in coastal watersheds to protect and restore degraded watersheds, including fish passage, regulatory mitigation, hydrologic improvements, and more as tools to.
- Economic ramifications, especially how population disruptions affect economic vitality and how habitat improvements can help.
- Regional partnerships, such as NFHP, LCCs, and others that take appropriate action at appropriate scales.
- Related trends, such as climate change and coastal wetland loss, that affect these same species and ecosystems.

**Format and time requirements:**

One full day of oral presentations, including four technical sessions each with four 20-minute talks.

## MEETING NEWS

### **December 4-5, 2012: 13th Flatfish Biology Conference, Westbrook, CT.**

<http://mi.nefsc.noaa.gov/flatfishbiologyworkshop>

### **American Fisheries Society**

#### **143rd Annual Meeting**

**Little Rock, AR**

**September 8-12, 2013**

The meeting theme, "Preparing for the Challenges Ahead," is likely to stimulate thoughts and presentations on:

- Challenges facing natural resource agencies regarding mandates to do more with fewer resources.
- Challenges facing educators regarding a growing knowledge base, changing student expectations, and teaching to Millennials.
- Challenges facing students regarding their roles as future scientists and managers serving increasingly more diverse stakeholders.
- Other challenges that confront fisheries and natural resource professionals

For more information, please visit the meeting webpage: <http://afs2013.com>

### **Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation Annual Meeting**

**San Diego, CA**

**November 3-7, 2013**

<http://www.erf.org/cerf2013>

## OTHER NEWS

### **AFS Resource Policy Committee**

I am writing to provide a bit of an introduction to the Resource Policy Committee (for more details, see attached "Intro to AFS RPC"), and to ask you for your help in managing the Society's Policies.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the RPC, we help the Society evaluate and develop resource Policy Statements for Society approval. These Policies are used to summarize the collective position of the Society on a particular issue, and carry the weight of the ~9000 fisheries professionals we represent. The Policies can be

used during public discourse on issues of the day (e.g., our climate change policy was submitted in response to a recent National Climate Change Assessment call for public comments), to inform regulatory authorities (e.g., our fish sedatives policy was used to kick-start a dialogue with the Food and Drug Administration about changes to the process of aquatic animal drug approvals), or to inform the public and guide our membership in fulfilling the mission of the Society.

AFS is not a lobbying organization, but Policies do represent one of the principle mechanisms by which the Society advocates on behalf of fish, fisheries professionals, and aquatic resources (see AFS's established Advocacy Guidelines here:

[http://fisheries.org/policy\\_advocacyguidelines](http://fisheries.org/policy_advocacyguidelines)).

We currently have more than 30 policies on a variety of topics (see attached "EXISTING POLICY..."). In addition to developing new policies as needed, the RPC is also charged with periodically reviewing existing policies to determine whether they should be reaffirmed, revised, or rescinded. Based on the RPC's review of the policies a few years ago, quite a few of our policies are in need of revision. This is where we need your help—we need subject experts to review the existing policies (particularly the high priority ones) and help the RPC update them. For example, the Fish Culture Section is an obvious source of expertise to help revise the Commercial Aquaculture Policy, the Habitat Section could be very helpful in updating the Marine Wilderness Policy, etc.

Interested members can contact me directly, and I will help them tackle the Policy of their choosing. The RPC looks forward to collaborating with the Sections.

Best,

Jesse Trushenski  
Chair, AFS Resource Policy Committee  
[saluski@siu.edu](mailto:saluski@siu.edu)

AFS Job Center Online (and other employment resources) <http://fisheries.org/jobs>

Renew your AFS Membership online at <https://fisheries.org/renew>