



October 2020

President's Message:

Fourth Quarter

Fall is finally here. The heat of summer and afternoon rains has faded away to cool breezes. Now well into the Greek alphabet with named storms and likely more coming.

Here we are in the last quarter of the year and things are still not better. Many have lost friends and family. We lost our FLAFS webmaster and FWC Freshwater Fisheries coworker Eric Sawyers in September (see tribute inside). Tragedy doesn't take a break either. Not even a month later and FWC Freshwater Fisheries also just lost Dana Katz. Suffering and loss of life continues around the world with no set end date.

The mood is somber, stress is high, and tempers flare. The political blame game is here for a crazy timely election year. The lure of tuning out by escaping is just not viable. The safest place is wherever you are and hopefully that is a comfortable place.

Will it get worse? It certainly can. Many predict it will get much worse unless resolved with a political solution. I'm not pinning my hopes and happiness on politics. I am confident that we can and will get through this. To be honest, my hope is that we get through this despite the politics. As scientists, we should share that a virus is not political.

So, who's ready to close out this 2020 year that will be not so fondly remembered? It's very likely that the isolation has separated us well beyond the physical boundaries. Our thoughts and perceptions of our society and our place in it has certainly changed this year. While I question lots of things, I'm trying hard to embrace the many differing ideas being cast about. Take a walk in someone else's shoes. Maybe try some more listening to why that neighbor or friend has that strong opinion.

Fisheries and fisheries biologists are in a good place. We are very fortunate to have great jobs both outdoors and with opportunities to work from home. As a family we can cover each other for work duties and responsibilities. We can also take time to look in on those not so close. Some extra effort to not let a colleague get isolated in a bad place can really make a huge difference. This is the time to lean in on colleagues, friends, and family to share the burden.

This season I'm passing out Kind bars and Swedish Fish. How about you?

Bob Heagey
Florida Chapter President



Getting in Touch

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Upcoming Events

February 18–21, 2021: Southern Division AFS
Annual Meeting Arlington, VA (see page 12).

February 19, 2021: Early Registration Deadline
for Florida Chapter AFS: Annual Meeting

March 1, 2021: Florida Chapter Award
Nomination Deadline

April 6–8, 2021: Florida Chapter AFS Annual
Meeting. Haines City, FL

Interested in contributing something to the Shellcracker?

Email: Scott Bisping at Scott.Bisping@myfwc.com with any articles or information that you would like to be included in the next issue. The deadline for the next issue is December 15th, 2020, so start fishing...

TRIBUTE

TO

ERIC SAWYERS

Eric was hired by FWC in 2006 as a Biological Scientist and has been a staple in the Freshwater Fisheries Research Section for the past 14 years. He was an original crew member hired to launch the Long-Term Monitoring program and later became the Project Leader, serving that role for the last decade. Eric was a multi-talented and accomplished scientist and programmer, an innovator and solution driven problem solver, a great ambassador for LTM, a reserved but highly effective leader, and influential mentor for his peers.



Eric had a traditional fisheries background earning BS and MS degrees from the University of Tennessee that prepared him well to be a fisheries scientist. He was active with professional fisheries organizations giving professional presentations at American Fisheries Society and Florida Lake Management Society annual conferences. He also served as webmaster for the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society since 2013. He co-authored five peer-reviewed publications on relevant topics such as gear comparison evaluations and sampling efficiency that were instrumental in the standardized design of the current program. As a biologist he quickly recognized the need for innovative solutions to manage large data and make it easily accessible by biologists for trend analysis. Eric pursued and earned a BS degree in Information Science Management while working full-time as a Project Leader to assemble the skills required to implement his vision for data management.

Eric's vision to leverage technology within LTM, along with the LTM sampling manual, drove the development of the processes implemented within the LTM project. The technology foundation not only ensured the initial success of the project but allowed the scope of the LTM project to grow beyond the original 30 designated core waterbodies to 190 distinct waterbodies represented in the database today. Eric managed people and technology processes that allowed LTM personnel throughout Florida to enter their freshwater fisheries data into a central database; he designed, tested, and implemented data entry forms and a series of data reports that allowed for the collection, safe storage, and retrieval of the data. The LTM



database currently stores 1.6 million rows of fish data collected from over 52,000 sites, all easily searchable and retrievable. Eric's efforts benefited freshwater fisheries in Florida but also Universities and Agencies throughout the country. There have been over 100 official data requests from external organizations and at least 8 different state Agencies that have requested input for designing their fisheries monitoring program. Eric's work allowed sampling data to be used in identifying trends and patterns in freshwater fisheries that were not possible in scope prior to the LTM project. His vision and specialized skillsets in programming, database management, data analysis, and fisheries biology paired with his natural leadership ability, innovative thinking, and work ethic cultivated the program and catapulted it into a national example of excellence.

The success of the LTM program represents the collaboration among virtually all staff that work on freshwater systems in one of the largest state fish and wildlife organizations in the country, FWC. Eric was the hub of the LTM wheel with spokes reaching across the state. He organized and coordinated field support among more than a dozen offices that sample over 60 lakes and rivers annually. He was methodical in his preparation and execution, which required delicately balancing individual project needs, ever changing environmental conditions, extreme weather, equipment malfunctions, and a diversity of personalities. Remarkably, you cannot find a person that could say a single negative word about Eric, and he would never speak poorly of a colleague. Eric was always positive and could see the good in any situation. He respected and empowered his crew and colleagues, and everyone loved and appreciated him. During his career with FWRI his colleagues nominated him for many awards, and he received recognition for excellence in supervision, excellence in teamwork, and excellence in leadership multiple years.

With all the accomplishments and success that Eric achieved his greatest impact was the influence he had on so many people's lives as a mentor and friend. Eric directly supervised 28 biologists during his career and mentored countless others in Eustis and around the state that have achieved their own successes. His mentorship, training, and guidance helped 7 former crew members promote to permanent positions in 3 different Divisions of FWC and 15 others moved on to other Agencies around the entire country transferring the wealth of knowledge gained under Eric's tutelage. The five current crew members are well-prepared to continue the standard of excellence Eric established for the program.

In addition to his illustrious career with FWC Eric had a second career in the Air Force earning the rank of Chief Master Sergeant after 18 years of honorable service, which included active deployment in Kuwait. Eric received the following awards and decorations from the United States Armed Forces: Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal (x2), Air Force Achievement Medal (x2), Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (x2), National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon, and Air Force Training Ribbon. As a veteran he served his country proudly and as a public servant for the state of Florida he played a major role in the conservation of freshwater fisheries. He leaves a legacy that will never be forgotten.





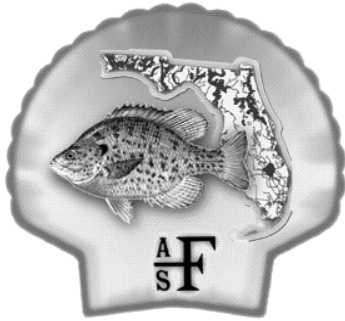
We invite you to submit abstracts for the 2021 (41st!!) annual meeting of the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society meeting. The meeting will take place April 6-8, 2021 at the Florida FFA Leadership Training Center, located in Haines City, on the shore of Lake Pierce. We hope you can join us!

The meeting will consist of both invited and contributed oral presentations and posters. The 2021 symposium is titled '**Schooling for Successful Science**'.

We all know that there are many fish species that exhibit schooling behavior for the betterment of their species. Whether it is to increase foraging success or escape those that are foraging on them, schooling is a behavior observed by both freshwater and marine species. As fisheries scientists, "schooling" amongst ourselves can help us meet our goals and objectives as well. Two of the most important aspects we can learn from schooling as scientists are learn from what was historically done and learn from those currently around us. In this year's symposium, I want to focus on how we got to where we are today. I want to focus on how we have learned from historical, potentially long-term data sets, and better fisheries science through communication and collaboration with those around us. This learning can take place either within our species (internal collaboration) or outside (external collaboration) but should focus on the implementation of an objective towards the advancement of fisheries science. Examples of topics relevant to the symposium would be: the various research projects done on rearing and stocking techniques for Largemouth Bass that can inform our freshwater hatcheries on developing more successful stocking techniques or marine fisheries independent monitoring that provides recruitment data on inshore species for regulation changes. Joint talks between collaborators are welcomed, but not necessary. I truly believe that understanding and sharing the stories to our present day will aid us in becoming better scientists and advancing Florida fisheries further ahead with our help.

We strongly encourage submissions for the symposium but will also accept submissions outside the scope of the symposium topic. Therefore, in your abstract submission please specify if you would like your presentation to be part of the symposium.

Deadline for abstract submission and early registration: **Friday, February 19, 2021.**



AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY FLORIDA CHAPTER

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION **APRIL 6–8, 2021** **HAINES CITY, FLORIDA**

Meeting Information

Meeting Details

The 2021 meeting will be held at the Florida FFA Leadership Training Center, 5000 Firetower Road, Haines City. Maps and directions will be available in the next issue of the Shellcracker or can be found on the Florida FFA Leadership Training Website at www.flaltc.org.

The meeting's schedule of events will be similar to past meetings. We will begin in the afternoon on Tuesday, April 6th with the presentation of contributed papers. The poster session will take place following dinner on Wednesday evening. The **'Schooling for Successful Science'** symposium will start on Thursday morning. The business meeting and raffle will follow dinner on Thursday night. We will hear more contributed papers on Friday morning, followed by lunch and the presentation of awards immediately following lunch.

Registration, Lodging, Meals, and Chapter Dues

Early registration deadline is **Friday, February 19, 2021**. The cost for early full registration is \$60.00. The cost for full registration after Friday, February 19, 2021 is \$80.00. **We strongly encourage folks to register early because the venue needs estimates for meals and rooms several weeks in advance. As an incentive, we will be raffling off a \$50 Bass Pro Shops gift card to one lucky early registrant.** "If you are staying at the FFA Leadership Training Center for this year's meeting, the cost for full meals and lodging in a **Villa Room** lodging is \$272.00. The cost for full meals and lodging in a **Lodge Room** is \$302.00. Please Note: there are 7 Lodge Rooms available and they will be reserved on a first come, first serve basis. Linens will be provided including pillows, towels, and sheets. **We ask that everyone has a roommate. Everyone must pay for lodging each night regardless of whether they have a roommate. Rooms and roommates will be chosen at the meeting's registration desk.**

For your convenience, **all registrations will be made online at:**

<https://FLAFS.regfox.com/florida-chapter-of-the-american-fisheries-society-2021-annual-meeting>.

This link to the registration website will also be made available on our chapter's website at <https://units.fisheries.org/fl/>. **There will be no mail-in registration forms this year, however, you can still mail a check for your meeting costs.**

If you can't attend the meeting, we have a link on the chapter's website (<https://units.fisheries.org/fl/chapter-dues/>) where you can pay your \$10 annual dues electronically, or you can still mail a check for \$10 to the Secretary/Treasurer made payable to Florida Chapter AFS.

Meeting Information

Opportunities for student support

As in previous years, student travel awards will be available for the annual meeting. Master's and doctoral students are also eligible for the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship, for which the recipient(s) will be announced at the annual meeting. More information and the application materials are available on the chapter's website at <https://units.fisheries.org/fl/awards-and-scholarships/>.

2021 Student Raffle

We need your help to make this meeting's raffle a great one. If you are interested in helping or donating items, please email Amanda Croteau (amanda.croteau@gmail.com) or Chelsea Crandall (kicksea@ufl.edu). Remember all proceeds fund our student travel grants for the following year's meeting. Please contact us to get involved!

We look forward to seeing everyone in Haines City for our 2021 annual meeting!

Thanks,
Daniel Nelson

1st Call for Oral & Poster Presentations!

Abstract Submission

Please submit your abstract as a MS Word document to Daniel Nelson. Please follow these instructions for submission:

In the email subject line, please enter FLAFS 2021: followed by the author names in your abstract (e.g., FLAFS2021 SmithTaylorRosen)

Use the same name for the abstract file, e.g., FLAFS2021 SmithTaylorRosen.doc

Please include the associated information requested above with the abstract

NEW: Please submit 1-3 “action shots”/pictures (jpg format <500 KB in size) associated with your research for the FL Chapter website with your abstract. Non-presenters may also submit photos to Chris Anderson or Daniel Nelson if they would like to contribute.

Abstract format

Abstract *word limit is 300 words* and should include the following information:

Presenter: Williams, Brian

Email: BrianWilliams@FloridaFish.net

Author(s): Williams, B.¹, K. Rowley¹, and P. George²

¹Affiliation with address.

²Affiliation with address.

Title: Recommendations for New Limits on Some of Florida’s Most Targeted Fish Species

Abstract: 300 word maximum

Student Presentation: No or Yes (work presented was completed while a student)

Presentation type: Oral or Poster

Would you like to be considered for the symposium? Yes or No

Are you willing to be a moderator? Yes or No

Are you willing to be a judge? Yes or No If so, oral presentation or poster?

Presentation details

Speakers will be given 20 minutes for talks (15 minutes for presentations and 5 minutes for questions and/or discussion). We will have PowerPoint on a laptop capable of accepting your presentation on a flash drive or other device.

Important note: Please use **widescreen PowerPoint slide format** for all presentations.

All posters will be presented on Tuesday evening, April 6, and can be left up for the entire meeting. Posters should be no larger than 150 X 100 cm (60” X 40”), but they can be set up either as portrait or landscape format on an easel.

If you require other options for projection or poster formats, please contact the annual meeting’s Program Chair, Daniel Nelson, Daniel.Nelson@myfwc.com.



Award Nominations

The Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society is seeking nominations for the Outstanding Achievement and Rich Cailteux Awards. Our membership is full of dedicated professionals, and it's time to recognize their efforts. Please review the award criteria below and send nominations to Eric Nagid (eric.nagid@myfwc.com) by **March 1st, 2021**. Applications should be limited to one page, but descriptive enough to convey why the individual is deserving of the award.

Outstanding Achievement Award

The purpose of the Outstanding Achievement Award is to recognize individuals for singular accomplishments and contributions to fisheries, aquatic sciences, and the Florida Chapter. The award aims to honor individuals for distinct contributions to the fisheries profession and enhancing the visibility of the Chapter. The Outstanding Achievement Award is the highest honor Florida AFS may bestow upon an individual member or collaborating group.

Candidates will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Original techniques or research methodology
- Original ideas, viewpoints, or data which contributed to fisheries management or our understanding of aquatic resources
- Important ecological discoveries
- An original fishery research or management program of statewide importance
- Activities in public education and outreach that have statewide impacts

Rich Cailteux Award

The purpose of the Rich Cailteux Award is to recognize individuals who have maintained a long-term commitment to research, management, and/or conservation of Florida fisheries and aquatic resources. This award aims to honor individuals for their career contributions to the fisheries profession and enhancing the visibility of the Florida Chapter.

Candidates will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- A minimum of 20 years spent in a fisheries related field in Florida
- Substantial career contributions to Florida aquatic resources and the fisheries profession
- An imaginative and successful program in fisheries and aquatic sciences education
- A history of mentoring young fisheries professionals, and involvement and leadership with the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society



Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

2021 Annual Meeting Registration Information

**Florida FFA Leadership Training Center
April 6–8, 2021**

All registrations will be made online:

<https://FLAFS.regfox.com/florida-chapter-of-the-american-fisheries-society-2021-annual-meeting>.

Payments for registration, meals, lodging, and chapter dues prior to the meeting will be made online via credit card or by mailing a check to the address listed on the registration website.

EARLY-REGISTRATION: registration paid online or check postmarked by **Friday, February 19, 2021**

\$50.00 One-day Registration \$60.00 Full Registration

LATE-REGISTRATION: registration paid online or check postmarked after **Friday, February 19, 2021**

\$60.00 One-day Registration \$80.00 Full Registration

Meals and Lodging

(lodging price based on double occupancy Villa Rooms, Lodge rooms are \$115.00 per night)

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

**No Lunch This Year*

\$19.00 Dinner

\$100.00 Lodging

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

\$6.00 Breakfast

\$11.00 Lunch

\$19.00 Dinner

\$100.00 Lodging

Thursday April 8, 2021

\$6.00 Breakfast

\$11.00 Lunch

Full Meals and Lodging (Villa Rooms)

\$272.00

Linens (provided)

****Full Meals and Lodging (Lodge Rooms)**

\$302.00

Linens (provided)

**Registrations will still be accepted at the meeting, but with a late registration fee.
We can accept VISA, MASTERCARD, AMEX, DISCOVER, cash, or check at the meeting**.**

**Make sure to register early! As an incentive to register early, FL AFS will be raffling off a
\$50 Bass Pro Shops gift card to one lucky early registrant!!**

Note: This is a buffet-style service and food must be ordered two weeks in advance.
Since meals are pre-paid, **please** submit your registration online as soon as possible.

****We ask that everyone has a roommate. Everyone must pay for lodging each night regardless of whether they have a roommate. Rooms and roommates will be chosen at the meeting's registration desk. There will be 7 total lodge rooms available (\$15 extra per night) and they will be offered on a first come, first serve basis.**

*****FWC employees may only use a state-issued P-Card to pay for the cost of registration and lodging. However, it is recommended to pay for all meeting costs with personal funds and seek reimbursement.**

Student Subunit Update

By: Lauren Kircher

Student Involvement

Everyone is learning to adjust to new technology to conduct research, workshops, and meetings right now. Keep an eye on our blog (<https://flafsstudentsubunit.wordpress.com>), Facebook, and Instagram to see what Florida student researchers are up to during this time.

The student travel grant (supported by student merchandise and the Sheepshead Shuffle) was awarded to Matthew Woodstock to attend the national annual AFS meeting being held virtually this year. Matt presented a talk about his ongoing Ph.D. research at Florida International University. The student subunit covered his registration costs to the meeting to offset costs and promote student involvement at a national level.

Sheepshead Shuffle participants will be notified soon with winners of prizes from this year's Shuffle.



New Merchandise

The student subunit is still offering hats for sale with the FL chapter logo. We will also soon be offering a sailfish design buff (UPF50) with the FL chapter logo. All merchandise goes to support travel grants and the student subunit. The subunit usually sells most of its merchandise at the chapter meeting. However, we are working with the FL chapter to offer merchandise online through the chapter website to raise funds.

Get Involved

Are you a student interested in promoting your research or developing your science communication skills? Become a contributor to our blog Reefs to Rivers (<https://flafsstudentsubunit.wordpress.com>) or send us pictures and have your research featured on our Instagram (www.instagram.com/flafsstudent)

Contact us at flafsstudent@gmail.com for information on how you can get involved. Don't forget to follow our blog, Instagram, and Facebook (www.facebook.com/AmericanFisheriesSocietyFIStudentChapter).

Do you use Amazon? By shopping with our Amazon Smile account, <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1208319>, Amazon donates to FLAFS. Funds go to support student travel awards. Sign up today!





AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY
SOUTHERN DIVISION ANNUAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 18TH-21ST, 2021
ARLINGTON, VA

Florida Chapter members are putting together two symposia for the upcoming Southern Division Meeting.

Black Crappie:

- o New sampling techniques
- o Tournaments
- o New angling technology
- o Angler recruitment
- o Who has a management plan?

Angler Recognition Programs:

- o User of programs for R3
- o Principle drivers for program participation
- o Involving citizen science in management
- o Effective changes in a technological
- o Program promotion

Black Crappie symposium contacts: Ryan Hamm (Ryan.Hamm@MyFWC.com) and Allen Martin (Allen.Martin@MyFWC.com)

Angler Recognition symposium contacts: Daniel Nelson (Daniel.Nelson@MyFWC.com) and Allen Martin

