



# Tennessee Chapter American Fisheries Society Newsletter



Winter 2018 - 2019

*President – Brenda Pracheil*  
*President-elect – Brandon Simcox*

*Treasurer/Secretary – Shawna Mitchell*  
*Past President – Brian Alford*

## President's Message

Greetings, Friends-in-Fish!

I hope that 2018 has been a safe and productive year in the field, lab, and at your computers. As we wind down the year, I want to take a minute to talk about our TNAFS Chapter successes in 2018, but also to express our excitement for undertaking the challenges for our Chapter in the 2019 new year.

The Tennessee Chapter had a great 2018 meeting in Knoxville that included excellent talks and awards for our 84 members in attendance. The backbone of the 2018 TNAFS meeting was outstanding presentations from nine students and 17 professionals. Kristin Irwin from UT Knoxville won the Best Student Presentation with a talk titled "Freshwater mussels of the Harpeth River and Upper Duck River drainages, Middle Tennessee," and Savannah Fernholz of Tennessee Tech was the runner-up with a talk titled "Relative densities, population characteristics, and sampling efficiency of bighead and silver carp in reservoirs of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers". Valerie Jones from Tennessee Tech won the Best Student Poster with a poster titled "Short-term response of fish assemblage to a low-head dam removal". Mark Thurman from TWRA was

awarded the TNAFS Outstanding Fisheries Scientist award for his many contributions to fisheries conservation and management in the state of Tennessee.

We were pleased to hold three workshops in conjunction with our 2018 meeting where 56 workshop participants honed their skills in native mussel identification (taught by Gerry Dinkins, UTK), fish identification (taught by Charlie Saylor and John Justice, TVA), and R data management, statistics, and graphics (taught by me... Brenda Pracheil, ORNL). We thank these instructors for sharing their time and talents with our membership to grow and renew our skills. We are very excited to see you all at our 2019 meeting in Chattanooga where there doubtless will be more outstanding talks, awards (*including a new award for Best Professional Talk!*), and continuing education workshops on **Non-game Fish Identification and Fish Age and Growth**.

In 2018, we awarded a total of \$1,500 among the 10 fishing derbies that applied for funding. These funds helped TWRA and students at Tennessee Tech expand their outreach efforts. The number of derby funding requests was up from 20% from 2017, but the total amount awarded to fishing derbies was down 50% from 2017. Unfortunately, with increasing numbers of derby applications, increasing commitments for student travel to the National AFS

meeting, and declines in cash reserves and revenue, our Executive Committee had to make difficult decisions about how to allocate funds. Our Chapter membership has sent a clear message that supporting fishing derbies and student travel are Chapter priorities and the Executive Committee has been working hard to ensure those priorities continue to be funded. We look forward to supporting fishing derbies again in 2019 (and the warm weather and increased daylight that comes along with them)!

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season and I can't wait to see you all in Chattanooga in February!

Fishfully yours,

Brenda Pracheil, pracheilbm@ornl.gov

President, Tennessee Chapter American Fisheries Society

## **Chapter Annual Meeting: February 26th-28th, 2019 at the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga, TN**

More information about the lodging, workshops, and how to get registered can be found on Tennessee Chapter Website meeting website (<https://units.fisheries.org/tn/2019-meeting-chattanooga/>).

### **\*\*CALL FOR ABSTRACTS\*\***

This year marks the first time the Tennessee Chapter of the American Fisheries Society will be hosting a special symposium session with select talks focusing on a central issue aquatic resource biologist's face on a regular basis. This year's symposium will focus on "Partnering to Improve Tennessee's Aquatic Resources". The 2019 symposium talks should emphasize how collaboration and partnerships on specific projects have helped us more efficiently work on important aquatic resource issues. We strongly encourage submissions to be included in this

first symposium but the meeting will also feature presentations outside the scope of the topic.

Those who wish to give an oral presentation or poster at the 2019 TN AFS meeting are required to submit abstracts by February 1, 2019. Please see the attached Call for Abstracts for more information and submission instructions.

Student presenters are invited to compete for the Best Student Paper and Poster Awards. Professional presenters are invited to compete for Best Symposium Paper and Poster Awards.

Brandon Simcox, President-Elect TN AFS

## **Nominations and Awards**

### **Call for Award Nominations!**

The Tennessee Chapter of the American Fisheries Society is seeking nominations for the Lifetime Achievement, Outstanding Fisheries Scientist, Distinguished Service, and Friends of Fisheries awards. Our membership is full of dedicated professionals, and it's time to recognize them for their efforts. **Please review the award criteria below and send nominations to Will Collier (Will.Collier@tn.gov) by December 31st.**

### **Lifetime Achievement Award**

Nominee should either be retired or within five years of retirement and have had a long history of significant contributions.

### **Outstanding Fisheries Scientist**

To be bestowed on the biologist in their early to mid-career for making significant contributions in the past year or over several years.

### **Distinguished Service Award**

To be bestowed on individuals that served as a Chapter officer for more than five years or served the chapter as chair of a long-standing Chapter committee for more than

five years.

### **Friends of Fisheries Award**

This award shall be made to non-Chapter member(s) who have distinguished themselves by service or commitment to the Chapter or the fisheries resources of Tennessee.

Also, the Executive Committee is soliciting nominations for the following Chapter officer/committee positions: **President-elect** and **Newsletter Editor**. If you would like to serve, or know someone who has agreed to be nominated, please inform one of the Executive Committee officers.

### **University of Tennessee-Knoxville Student Sub-Unit**

The University of Tennessee AFS student subunit is in a joint organization with the UTK Wildlife Society student chapter, that is collectively called the UTK Wildlife and Fisheries Society (UTK WFS). We have had a busy and successful year since our last update.

Last spring, many of our members volunteered to sample Lake Sturgeon with experimental gill-nets in Watts Bar and Fort Loudoun Lakes as part of the Southeastern Lake Sturgeon Working Group's monitoring efforts. In February, many of our members attended the 2018 Tennessee Chapter of the American Fisheries Society meeting held in Knoxville at the UT Conference Center, where members were able to attend mussel and fish identification workshops, present their research, and attend scientific presentations. Also, in February, our members hosted the 2018 UTK Wild Game Dinner, a public event where various wild game species are cooked multiple ways and served at a buffet-style dinner. At this event, we also have a live and silent auction. Proceeds from the wild game dinner provide funding to send members to professional meetings and other various events throughout the year. The dinner was a great

success. Some members of the UTK WFS student chapter and AFS student subunit were able to participate in the 2018 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave hosted by the LSU Wildlife Society in Baton Rouge last spring. The UTK team was very successful in many events and finished third overall. Last March, one of our members presented their research and attended scientific presentations at the SDAFS annual meeting held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In April, members assisted a local pond-owner in assessing fish species abundance in their pond. We hosted a crawfish boil for members to close out the semester. It was a great time for fellowship and relaxing before finals week. At our last bi-weekly meeting this year in April, we hosted Joyce Coombs, the recently retired Pigeon River Recovery Coordinator at UTK; she gave a great seminar on the Pigeon River Recovery Project. We ended the spring semester with one final volunteer event by assisting with fish translocations from the French Broad River to the Pigeon River, as part of the Pigeon River Recovery Project.

Over the summer, most of our members worked summer internships or jobs while others worked on research. However, some of our members were able to work a registered student organization booth for our UTK Wildlife and Fisheries Society at freshmen orientation sessions all summer for recruitment purposes. We used this opportunity to recruit new members for the upcoming school year. Also, during the summer, one of our members was able to go to the annual AFS meeting in Atlantic City and present on their research and attend scientific presentations.

We kicked off the new school year by hosting a back to school meet-and-greet for our members and new students interested in wildlife and fisheries. In September, many of our members volunteered and worked a booth at SturgeonFest 2018. We used this opportunity for educational outreach to attendees, to both inform and answer questions on Lake Sturgeon. We also had

several members volunteer at the Haywood County, NC, “Kids in the Creek” event, where 8<sup>th</sup> graders from schools in Haywood County come out to the upper Pigeon River and learn about sampling in streams, stream ecology, and what aquatic organisms are found in this stream. In October, some members had the opportunity to host a “Fishing 101” workshop for a local boy scout troop. This was a two-day event. On the first day, members instructed boy scouts on the basics of fishing and sport fish identification. On the second day, they took the boy scouts to Melton Hill Lake so they could use the previously learned skills to catch fish. Also, in October, members assisted TWRA with Rainbow Trout removal from a stream so Brook Trout can eventually be stocked in the stream. At one of our bi-weekly meetings in October, we hosted Gerry Dinkins, the Curator of Malacology at the McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture. Mr. Dinkins gave an outstanding presentation on his work with mussels. We were also able to send members to the Southeastern Association of Fisheries and Wildlife Agencies conference in Mobile, AL at the end of October, where members attended scientific presentations. We had one final volunteer event in October, with some members volunteering at the annual Coal Creek Health Day at Briceville Elementary School, a multi-agency event where students are taught about stream health. We ended October, by hosting a fish fry for members and their families to fellowship with one another. In November, we had multiple members attend the 2018 Southeastern Fishes Council annual meeting at Hickory Knob State Park, SC, to present on their research and attend scientific presentations. As the semester winds down, our members are gearing up for Lake Sturgeon sampling once again, and preparing for a busy spring, full of conferences, volunteering, and outreach.

Kyler Hecke, UTK AFS Student Subunit  
Grad. Student Representative

## **From the Editor’s Desk**

*On a personal note, I have been Newsletter Editor since the days we sent them via snail mail, but I will be retiring at the end of the year and this will be my last.*

*Richard Strange, Editor*