the Shellcracker

FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

http://www.sdafs.org/flafs

January, 2012

President's Message:

Organization. Above all, that's what professional scientists are supposed to be good at – the myths of the absent-minded professors are not only indeed myths, especially in today's ultra-competitive academic world, but also don't apply at all to the numerous non-academic roles held by scientists.

Unfortunately, the necessity (or should I say, the benefit?) of fieldwork in our profession as fisheries folks often results in changes to schedules due to more factors than we can name around the annual meeting campfire: broken/lost fishing gear, blown boat engines, unfishable weather, missing crew, and so on. (I actually was on a commercial boat once years ago whose captain wouldn't leave the dock on Sunday in our dry county because he couldn't buy beer for the trip.) Most of us have tried a number of different systems over the years, since what worked for us as undergraduate students often wasn't helpful at the less-structured graduate school level, especially with that aforementioned field-work component. In light of the upcoming annual chapter meeting preparations and start of the academic semesters, I'll simply offer a couple of thoughts that might help make your professional responsibilities a little easier.

One suggestion that's worked well in my lab group is that I found the guidance on graduate school, well, honestly "lacking" in the substance I felt was needed for most of my students. Over the last four years, I've written a number of additional documents that cover everything from how to write a thesis proposal to detailed plans for how to prepare our lab for an oncoming hurricane. (For those who might not know, my lab is currently in a mobile modular building sitting on a sand spit of a barrier island – I don't have much confidence in it surviving a Category II or greater storm.) Another of those documents is one listing general lab policies, including expected publication norms and under what situations I'll use research funds to pay for scientific conferences. What these documents do more than anything else though is to eliminate the guesswork about the basics, to let your colleagues concentrate instead on the tasks at hand. Many of the state and federal agency folks have such guidance documents in abundance already, but even you might find that some informal memo would help. I would remind you to remember that policies are simply guidelines, not hard-and-fast rules; given a good enough reason, policies can be changed as needed.

The other suggestion that's worked well for us is to restructure our whole internal lab organization. In essence, I'd been trying to act as the lead contact for all of my various grants and contracts for three-plus years, and I found that I indeed had a personal limit, especially if I wanted all of those projects to be as effective as they could be. My lab group is now working on 12 separate awards, with each full-time graduate student serving as the lead coordinator for at least one of them, while I still act as the coordinator of all the projects. This organizational change has helped immensely, allowing me to focus on the more mundane yet time-consuming tasks of running a lab, whether approving invoices and travel reimbursement requests, to say nothing of preparing and updating my lectures! What is also helpful, especially at the masters' student level, is for each of them to come out of their program with a personal understanding of how to run a project, from budgeting to scheduling to working one-on-one with collaborating fishers. Frankly, I'm going to really miss the organizational skills developed by a couple of my more senior students, but I also know those same skills will be appreciated by their new doctoral advisors.

Best wishes in this New Year, and I look forward to seeing you in Altoona in February!

Dave Kerstetter
FL AFS President

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Upcoming Events

January 26 – 29, 2012: Southern Division AFS Spring Meeting. Biloxi, Mississippi. www.sdafs.org/meetings/2012/default.htm

February 2 – 3, 2012: Using Acoustic Tags to Track Fish. University of Washington School of Aquatic Fishery Sciences, Seattle, Washington. http://www.HTIsonar.com/at_short_course.htm

February 9 – 10, 2012: Using Hydroacoustics for Fisheries Assessment. University of Washington School of Aquatic Fishery Sciences, Seattle, Washington. http://www.HTIsonar.com/ha_short_course.htm

Check out our Parent Society's calendar at http://www.fisheries.org/afs/calendar.html for other events not listed here!

Interested in contributing something to the Shellcracker? Email Kevin Johnson at *kevin.johnson@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 March 31st, 2012, so start fishing...

Feature Article

Monitoring Florida's Freshwater Fisheries

Kimberly Bonvechio
FWRI-Eustis Fisheries Research Lab
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)'s long-term monitoring (LTM) program was established in 2006 and includes a number of approaches for monitoring fish assemblages and sport fishes, including electrofishing, mini fyke nets, experimental gill nets, trawling, and angler creel surveys. The LTM program incorporates sampling on approximately 60 Florida lakes and reservoirs (Bonvechio 2009), as well as 14 river and canal systems primarily focused in the north-central and western regions of the State (Strickland et al. 2011) (Figure 1). These systems were chosen by FWC biologists based on their size, sport fisheries, location and/or issues related to population growth and competing natural resource uses.

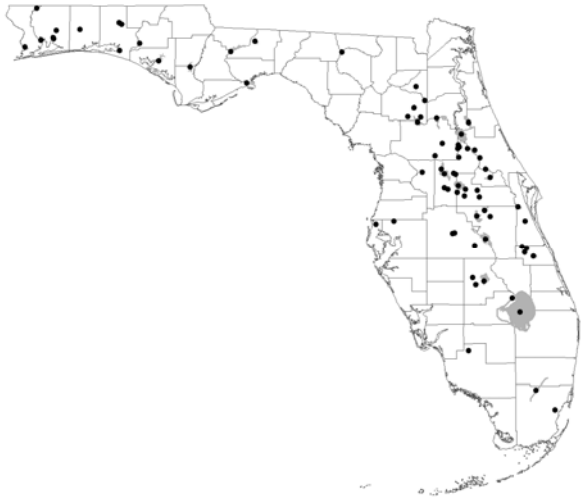


Figure 1. Map depicting all of the current LTM systems.

The LTM data have a myriad of uses, as evident by the number and type of data requests received each year. Requests have ranged from single-species data for evaluating the need for an endangered species designation to fish community data for a an environmental course demonstration. Within FWC, however, these data are primarily collected for monitoring long-term trends in fish community composition and the population metrics of important freshwater sport fishes. Over 500,000 fish records for 14,000 locations have been archived to date, and this number will continue to grow as more gear and data types are accommodated by the database. Below, we highlight some of the information being collected via the LTM program and their potential uses.

Fish Communities – Lentic Systems

Fish community data are collected with a variety of gears suited for sampling fishes in different habitats or zones. In Florida's lentic systems, boat electrofishing is used to

sample fishes in the shallow (<2 m), littoral zone in the fall (September to December) of each year. Although the number of systems sampled with this gear has varied among years, consistent patterns in abundance, species composition, and fish community characteristics have generally been observed through time. Diversity and richness in LTM systems was similar across years with a 5-yr average of 4.59 and 24, respectively (Figure 2). During this time period, 113 fish species have been identified, the most common of which have been bluegill *Lepomis macrochirus* and largemouth bass *Micropterus salmoides*, which were found in every system sampled each year. Bowfin *Amia calva*, brook silverside *Labidesthes sicculus*, Florida gar *Lepisosteus platyrhincus*, golden shiner *Notemigonus crysoleucas*, lake chubsucker *Erimyzon sucetta*, redear sunfish *Lepomis microlophus*, and warmouth *Lepomis gulosus* were also common, being found in $\geq$ 70% of systems in every year. Bluegill and threadfin shad *Dorosoma petenense* have consistently been ranked most abundant numerically, and in terms of weight, bluegill, bowfin, Florida gar, and largemouth bass consistently ranked high. Although average statewide values have been relatively consistent among years, high among-year variability has been observed in some systems. Long-term monitoring provides a valuable opportunity to evaluate the effects of short-term events, such as a hurricane, or long-term processes, such as hyper-eutrophication or habitat changes, on the overall fish community.

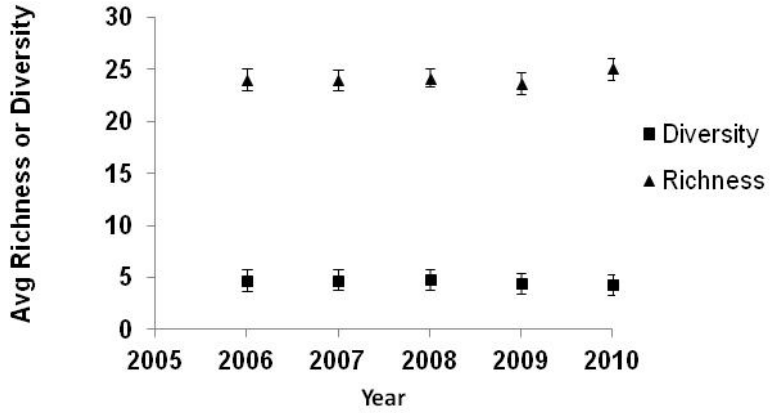


Figure 2. Average richness and diversity, by year, for lakes sampled using LTM standard protocols. The number of lakes for each year ranged from 30 to 41.

Fish Communities – Lotic Systems

Community electrofishing samples have also been collected each year, either in the spring or fall, from twelve north-central and -western rivers from 2008 to 2011. Of the 132 fish species recorded to date, 20 species are considered marine or euryhaline, six diadromous, and eleven invasive species. Eleven species were common to all rivers, including American eel *Anguilla rostrata*, chain pickerel *Esox niger*, pirate perch *Aphredoderus sayanus*, brook silverside *Labidesthes sicculus*, warmouth, bluegill, spotted sunfish, redear sunfish, largemouth bass, blackbanded darter *Percina nigrofasciata*, and hogchoker *Trinectes maculates*. Within a river, the number of species encountered ranged from 38 to 77; however, in most instances, the species composition has been numerically dominated by species of the Cyprinidae, Atherinopsidae, and Centrarchidae families. Invasive species have been found in many of these rivers, including flathead catfish which have been known to reshape riverine fish communities (e.g., see reviews in Michaletz and Travnichek 2011). In the Yellow River, for example, the flathead population appears young and expanding compared to previous research (Strickland et al. 2011). Further long-term monitoring of these species will help to track any changes in their abundance and distribution, as well as changes in native fish assemblages due to such invasions.

Largemouth bass is the premier freshwater sportfish in Florida. To provide an overall view of Florida's largemouth population, catch rate, growth, and mortality were assessed for all lakes that have been sampled in the past 5 years using standard protocols. In all, data for 25 lakes were used to estimate average, slow (using average lengths minus one standard deviation), and fast (using average lengths plus one standard deviation) growth for age-0 to age-10 fish (Figure 3A). For mortality, the same group of lakes, with the exception of Lake Eloise, was included, and for these lakes, the average annual mortality rate was 42% and ranged from 24% to 67%. Average catch rate (± 1 SE) for individual lakes ranged from 0.01 ± 0.01 to 3.85 ± 0.28 fish/min during this period, but annual averages for all lakes ranged from 0.82 to 1.00 fish/min (Figure 3B). Similar statewide summaries have also been created for black crappie *Pomoxis nigromaculatus* and sunfish species *Lepomis* spp. in lakes. This information, in addition to angler creel data such as effort (angler hours) and catch rate (fish per angling hour) (Figure 3C), can provide biologists with benchmark values with which they can compare individual fisheries.

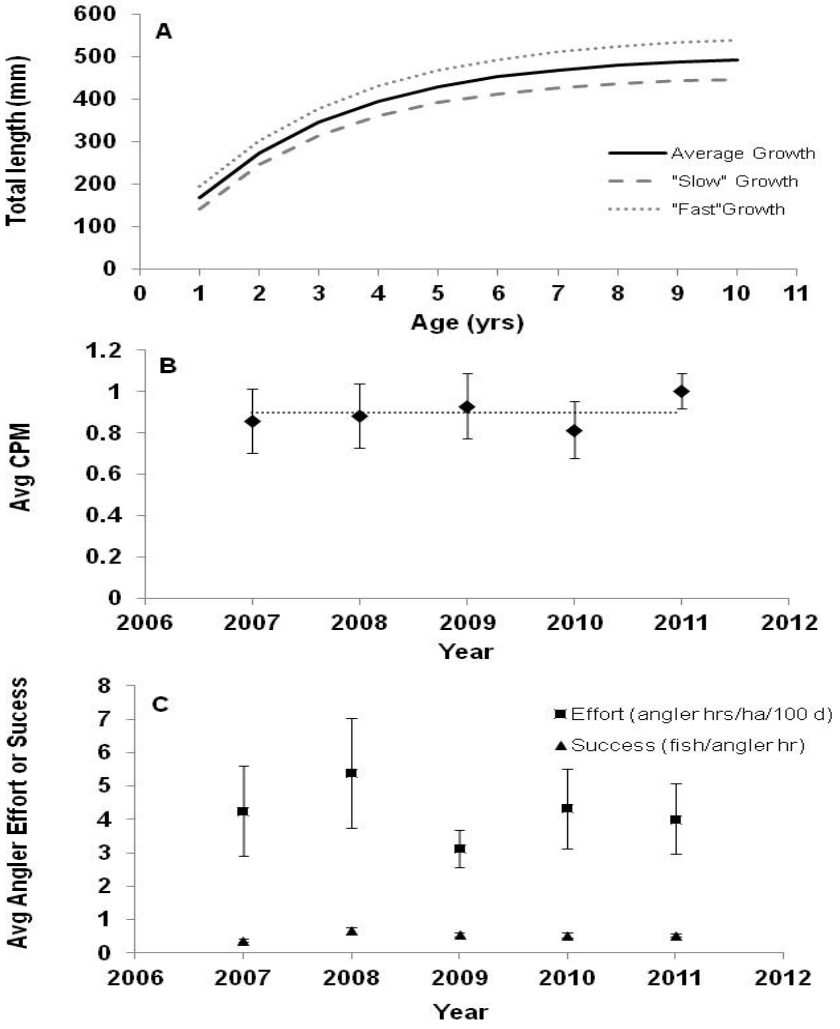


Figure 3. Average growth based on individual lake mean predicted length-at-age estimates (top panel B), average electrofishing catch rate (CPM; fish/min) of largemouth bass based on individual lake mean catch rate estimates for each year (middle panel B), and statewide average angler effort (angler hrs/ha/100 d) and success (fish/angler hr). Error bars indicate +/- 1 standard error, whereas "slow" and "fast" growth are based on + 1 standard deviation and - 1 standard deviation from mean length-at-age estimates.

Similar to lakes, one or more sportfish species, including select sunfishes *Lepomis* spp. and black basses *Micropterus* spp., were selected for more detailed monitoring in the LTM rivers to track trends in the population metrics of these species. Angler surveys on the Ochlockonee, Escambia, Chipola, and Apalachicola rivers are also conducted to assess and monitor the recreationally important river fisheries. Although the target species, season, and creel design differ among systems, sport fish directed effort, catch, harvest, and catch success were estimated for each. Monitoring the recreational fisheries is important to identify trends, such as the declining trend in fishing effort observed in the Escambia River marsh (Figure 4), so that, if needed, management actions can be evaluated and implemented to increase angler participation, satisfaction, and success.

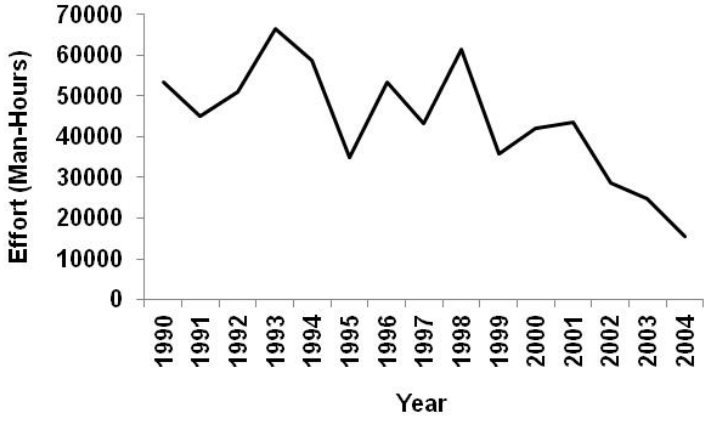


Figure 4. Fishing effort estimates from the Escambia River marsh during the 14-week peak fishing season from 1990 through 2003.

Since its implementation, FWC's standard sampling protocols have undergone continued evaluation to ensure their scientific validity, as well as to improve the cost-effectiveness to the State. From gear comparisons (e.g., sinking versus floating gill nets Bonvechio et al. *In press*) to sample size estimations (e.g., fall electrofishing Bonvechio et al. 2009), these methods will continue to be evaluated and, when needed, adjusted. Future research will include continued evaluation of haul seines for sampling off-shore fish communities in lakes (e.g., Tuten et al. 2010), assessing the best tag-recapture method to estimate population size of important sport fishes in lakes, addressing catchability issues with both river and lake sampling techniques, and new techniques for accurately measuring habitat parameters.

We have highlighted some important uses of LTM data, but their potential is almost limitless. With continued refinement of the LTM program and data archiving, these data will become an increasingly valuable resource for the future management of our freshwater fisheries resources.

References:

Bonvechio, K. I., S. Hooley, S. Crawford, and R. E. Sawyers. In press. Comparison of sinking and floating gill nets for collecting shads *Dorosoma* spp. in shallow Florida lakes. Lake and Reservoir Management.

Bonvechio, K. I., M. J. Catalano, R. E. Sawyers, and S. Crawford. 2009. Determining sample size for monitoring fish communities using electric fishing in three Florida lakes. Fisheries Management and Ecology 16:409-412.

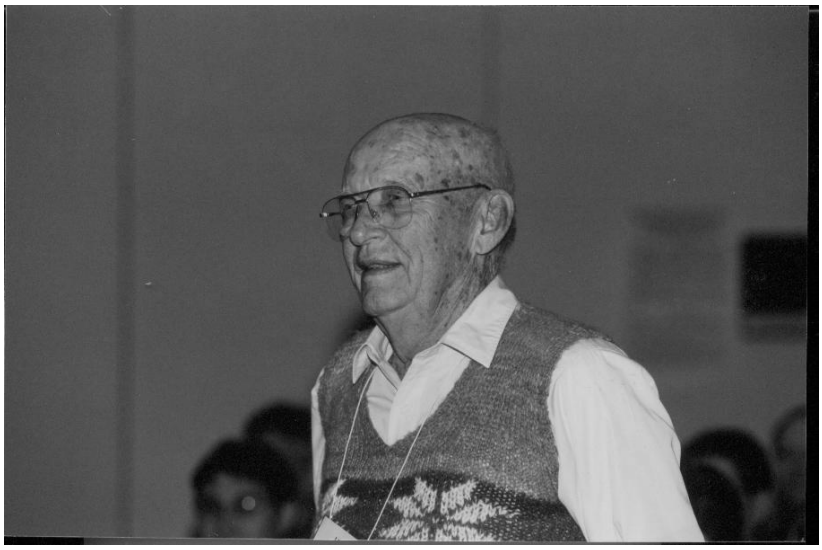
Michaletz, P. H., and V. H. Travnichek. 2011. Conservation, ecol-ogy, and management of catfish: the second international symposium. American Fisheries Society, Symposium 77, Bethesda, Maryland.

Strickland, P., E. Nagid, and J. Knight. 2011. River Monitoring. Federal Aid Wallop-Breaux Completion Report F-131. Tallahassee, Florida.

Tuten, T., W. A. Strong, E. J. Nagid, and M. M. Hale. 2010. Comparisons of haul seine and otter trawl catches of black crappie and the evaluation of haul seines for future research. North American Journal of Fisheries Management 30:964-975.

Special Feature

Obituary for our friend Jack Dequine



John (Jack) F. Dequine 1917-2011

John (Jack) F. Dequine , 94 of Leesburg, Florida, patriarch of SDAFS, died November 27, 2011.
Jack survived by daughters Jeanne and Joy, of Miami, Florida. Jack Dequine had a rich career in the fisheries profession, with a large impact on our field, our students, and the American Fisheries Society.

Career

Jack graduated from the University of Maine in 1940, and in 1941 went to Trinidad, British West Indies where his research on rubber production supported war-time efforts to develop a synthetic rubber for military use. Jack then took a position as the Chief of Fisheries for Kentucky Game and Fish Commission, and shortly thereafter moved to Florida in 1946 as the chief fishery biologist for Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission. His was the first "official" fishery biologist position created by that agency. Much of Jack's work in the late 1940s and early 1950s attempted to resolve conflicts between commercial and recreational fishing interests and to properly establish rules governing take of freshwater fishes. Jack was dedicated to using science to inform management actions, rather than relying on public sentiment to implement common management strategies. Between 1946 and 1953, the fisheries staff in Florida grew under Jack's leadership in response to increasing user-group controversies and other issues in the state. He was responsible for building and directing a staff capable of addressing the broad spectrum of important fisheries issues in Florida.

Jack left the agency in 1954 and started Southern Fish Culturists, Inc., a private business related to fish, fisheries, and aquatic resources. The business initially was set up as a wholesale bait distributor but soon added production capabilities for earthworms, baitfish, and ornamental fishes. In the 1950s, Jack also began a small private consulting practice that served businesses, private landowners, and public agencies on a variety of topics, including aquatic weed control, wetlands assessment, residential development, water quality analysis, fish kill assessments and abatement, and management of private lakes. His track record of comprehensive and thorough evaluations not only was service to the clients and society, but also served to set a good example for others in the industry and regulatory arena. As a businessman, Jack was known as someone that "You could call anytime and get a helpful response."

Involvement in the AFS

Jack is appropriately recognized as a "founding father", energetic leader, and persistent supporter of the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society. At the AFS (parent society) annual meeting in 1947, Jack and several other attendees from southeastern states agreed that the national meetings lacked the emphasis they felt necessary to cover subjects of relevance to their region. Jack and colleagues approached the directors of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, who endorsed the concept and authorized the subsequent inclusion of a fisheries component at their annual meetings. The first such meeting was held in St. Petersburg, Florida in November 1947.

Jack spearheaded a working group to petition AFS for recognition as a Division, and was officially elected first president of the Southern Division AFS in Dallas, Texas in September 1952. The first official session of the Southern Division AFS followed in October 1952 at the Southeastern Meeting held in Savannah, GA. About 40 fishery workers representing all southeastern states, academia, and federal agencies were registered in attendance and affirmed Jack Dequine as the first President of the Division. The 2002 Southern Division Meeting and Southeastern represented the 50th anniversary of this important event, and Jack attended these celebrations.

Perhaps Jack's greatest accomplishment and contribution to the AFS was the creation and maintenance of AFS award programs that recognize and encourage excellence in fishery professionals. In 1967, Jack and other members of a Former-Presidents Committee recommended the establishment of a best-paper award to recognize excellence of fisheries contributions at the annual Southeastern conference, and Jack led efforts to establish award criteria. He served as Chair of the Division's Awards Committee from its inception in 1967 through 1987 (21 years of service). In 1979, Jack led new efforts to create a second type of award for fisheries professionals in the south, the Outstanding Achievement Award. This award remains the most prestigious offered by the Division by recognizing significant long-term individual contributions to the field of fisheries and aquatic biology. Through these awards, and by his encouragement and personal example, Jack has influenced the professional development of fisheries biologists throughout the southeast.

Over the years Jack remained involved with many important Division activities. He attended nearly all of the SDAFS meetings in the past 60 years, missing only a few. Jack was a fastidious compiler of correspondence and other paperwork relevant to business of the Division, and he maintained a set of files that was essentially complete through the mid-1980s. Jack's perennial presence at Division business meetings and past-presidents' meetings provided continuity of conduct and an infallible corporate memory. As late as early 2011, Jack presented the award in his name (John F. Dequine Best Paper Award) to Eric Nagid and coauthors at the SDAFS annual meeting, and he escorted incoming SDAFS First Vice President M. Allen into office at that same conference in Tampa, Florida.

Along the way Jack continued his lifelong hobbies of hunting and fishing. He fished with the authors of this tribute regularly over the last decade, sharing his history, humor and wisdom. He enjoyed turkey hunting in Central Florida, including harvest of a very large gobbler in spring 2011. Well into his 90s, Jack also hunted deer in Georgia with M. Van Den Avyle and Bob Garrett.

Jack Dequine will be remembered and missed by his friends, family, and by the AFS. We offer this as a celebration of his life and his accomplishments, from which all of us in the AFS have benefited. We are grateful for his friendship, the opportunities we shared afield with him, and for his mentorship.

Mike Van Den Avyle
Mike Allen
Bill Pine
Rich Noble

Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
4H Camp Ocala, Florida
Annual Meeting Registration: February 21-23, 2012

Official Use Only:
Postmarked:_____
Entered: _____
Deposited: _____

First: _____ **Last:** _____ ☐ **Student (please check)**

Affiliation:_____
This address will be used in our mailing list and should be the one where you want to receive materials.

Street Address:_____

City:_____ **State:**_____ **Zip Code:**_____

Work Phone:_____ **Ext:**_____ **Email:**_____

T-Shirt Size: (Select One) Small Medium Large X-Large XX-Large XXX-Large

Arrival Time: (Select One) Tue Noon Tue PM Wed AM Wed Noon Wed PM Thur AM

Please check the appropriate boxes below.

PRE-REGISTRATION: registration form postmarked by Friday, January 13, 2012
☐$ 30.00 One-day Registration ☐$ 40.00 Full Registration

LATE-REGISTRATION: registration form postmarked after Friday, January 13, 2012
☐$ 35.00 One-day Registration ☐$ 47.00 Full Registration

Meals and Lodging

Tuesday, February 21, 2012
- ☐ $7.00 Lunch
- ☐ $14.50 Dinner
- ☐ $26.00 Lodging

Wednesday, February 22, 2012
- ☐ $6.50 Breakfast
- ☐ $7.00 Lunch
- ☐ $14.50 Dinner
- ☐ $26.00 Lodging

Thursday, February 23, 2012
- ☐ $6.50 Breakfast
- ☐ $7.00 Lunch

Full Meals and Lodging ☐ **$115.00**
Linens (please bring own, limited supply) ☐ $ 6.00

Florida Chapter dues (calendar year 2012) ☐ **$10.00** ☐ FL Chapter dues paid via AFS annual membership.

Total Amount: _____

Total Enclosed: _____ ○Cash ○Check
(Minimum $10)

Balance Due: _____ ○Cash ○Check ○Credit

Please Make Checks Payable to Florida Chapter, AFS and mail to:

Travis Tuten
FWC
7922 NW 71st Street
Gainesville, FL 32653

Phone: (352) 955-3220 ext. 113
Fax: (352) 955-3210
Email: travis.tuten@myfwc.com

*****Checks not payable to 'Florida Chapter AFS' will be returned to sender.
Registration Forms may be sent via fax (attention: Travis) or via email: (subject: 2012 AFS FL).
A minimum amount of $10 must be mailed to validate your registration.

Note: This is a cafeteria-style service and food must be ordered a week in advance.
Since meals are pre-paid, **please** submit your registration form as soon as possible.
Registrations will still be accepted at the meeting, but with a late registration fee.
We can only accept **non-FWC VISA** or **MASTERCARD** on the meeting date**.**
Credit card charges are submitted by our parent organization, AFS, after the meeting.
If you would like to pay your meeting fees with a credit card, then please send a $10 check for your deposit.

Annual Meeting and Symposium Announcement – 2nd Call for Papers
32nd Annual Meeting of the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

February 21-23, 2012
Ocala 4H-Camp, Altoona, Florida

The 2012 meeting is only a month away, and it is time to submit your abstract, register, and otherwise make your plans to come to the meeting! The meeting format will consist of both invited and contributed oral presentations and posters. The symposium on Wednesday will be 'Fish habitat use over environmental gradients: response or selection?' Variability in habitat characteristics and abiotic factors within aquatic systems can contribute to differences in nekton habitat use. The value of a particular habitat can differ based on interrelated factors such as geographic location, associated shoreline or benthic habitat characteristics, and environmental conditions such as the amount of freshwater inflow. As either marine or freshwater fisheries biologists, we need to consider the complex relationships governing the value of habitat for nekton to inform management decisions appropriately. This year's symposium will review these relationships and methods (i.e., multivariate statistics, indices of abundance, etc.) to explain their influence on fish populations, community structure, and ontogeny.

In addition to the symposium, Florida AFS past president and Southern Division AFS vice president Mike Allen (msal@ufl.edu) will be putting together a tribute for long-time Florida AFS member and the first president of the Southern Division, Jack Dequine, on Tuesday afternoon. Speakers will highlight some of his contributions to fisheries science over the years and relate some fish tales about his life. He will be sadly missed at this year's meeting. Please see a special tribute and obituary about Jack in this issue of the Shellcracker.

All abstracts are due ***Friday, January 13, 2012***, for full consideration in the symposium or contributed sessions. Please send your abstract (<300 words) and associated information (following the format given below) to **kerry.flaherty@myfwc.com**; in the subject line of your email, please list the author(s) as they will appear in the program (e.g., SchaubMooreMajikowski.doc). Platform presentations will be 20 minutes (15 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for questions or discussion). We will have PowerPoint 2007 loaded on a laptop capable of accepting your presentation on a CD, DVD or flashdrive. All posters will be formally presented on Tuesday evening, February 21, 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. For updated guidelines and tips for oral presentations and posters visit the Chapter's website (http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/meetings.html).

Students: There is still time to apply for travel awards (Deadline January 31st). The application form is available on the Chapter's website at http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/awards.html. Master's and doctoral students are also eligible for the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship (Deadline January 31st), for which the recipient(s) will be announced at the Annual Meeting. More information and the application materials are available at http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/awards.html.

Registration can now be completed through an online form: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dDRPT2E0d18xZVh6UjZXSXk2cTFESmc6MQ. Once you fill out the online form, you can either pay online through PayPal or print the completed form and mail it in with your check, cash, or money order.

If you would rather use a hard copy of the registration form, it can be found in this issue of the Shellcracker or on the Chapter's website: http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/meetings.html.

Abstract Format:
Limit abstracts to ≤ 300 words and follow this format (2007 MS WORD is preferred):

Presenter: Schaub, M.; Email: MattShaub@HoustanTexans;
Author(s): Schaub, M.[1], S. Moore[2], and D. Majikowski[3]. Affiliation. Address.

Title: The Sometimes Rocky Road of a University of Virginia Quarterback

Abstract: You know how this works: <300 words (MS Word will count it for you!)

Student Presentation: no (versus yes, work reported was completed while a student).

Presentation type: oral (versus 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?

DRAFT PROGRAM SCHEDULE
32nd Annual Meeting of the Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society
February 21-23, 2012
4-H Camp Ocala, Altoona, Florida
Tuesday, February 21
1100-1800 h Registration
1200-1300 h Lunch
1300-1700 h Contributed Papers, *Tribute to Jack Dequine*
1700-1900 h Poster Setup
1800-1900 h Dinner
1900-2000 h Formal Poster Session ….Followed by the ***Bonfire Social***
Wednesday, February 22
0700-0800 h Breakfast
0730-1800 h Registration
0800-1200 h **Symposium:** *Fish habitat use over environmental gradients: response or selection?*
1200-1300 h Lunch
1300-1700 h **Symposium** (continued), Contributed Papers
1700-1800 h Student Subunit Meeting (all students); Time to relax (all others)
1800-1900 h Dinner
1900-2000 h **Chapter Business Meeting**
Awards presentation: Student Awards – Travel and Roger Rottmann Scholarship &
Professional Awards – Outstanding Achievement and Rich Cailteux
Followed by **THE RAFFLE, AUCTION,** and the ***Bonfire Social***
Thursday, February 23
0700-0800 h Breakfast
0730-0900 h Registration
0800-1200 h Contributed Papers
1200-1300 h Lunch
1300-1310 h **Awards Presentation**: Best Papers/Best Posters; Power Tie and Lampshade Awards

Directions to Ocala 4-H Camp:

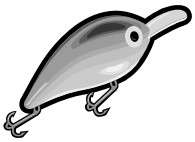
The Ocala 4-H Center is located in the Ocala National Forest on Sellers Lake. Directions are provided below for those traveling from different parts of the state. Mileage estimates are to be used for general reference only.

From SW:
Take I-75 N to 44 E, □head towards Leesburg, □turn right onto 441 S, □in Eustis, take exit for 19N (on right), □turn left at light and head north on 19 N for ~19 mi., □turn left onto NFS 535 at the Fire Control Center/Camp Ocala 4-H Center sign. Center will be on the right about 1/2 mi.

From SE:
Take Turnpike N to 429 N towards Apopka, turn left onto 441 N, □once in Eustis, take a right onto 19 N., □go for ~19 mi. and turn left onto NFS 535 at the Fire Control Center/Camp Ocala 4-H Center sign. Center will be on the right about 1/2 mi.

From NW:
Take I-75 S to Ocala, take the exit for 326 E, when 326 ends, turn left onto 40 E, turn right onto 19 S, go for ~4.5 mi. and turn right onto NFS 535 at the Fire Control Center/Camp Ocala 4-H Center sign. Center will be on the right about 1/2 mi.

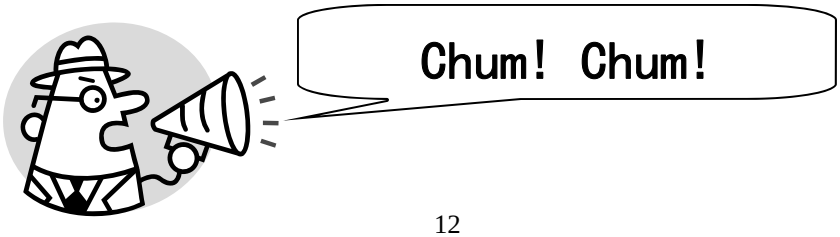
From NE:
Take 17 S to Palatka, turn right onto 19 S, go for ~42 mi. and turn right onto NFS 535 at the Fire Control Center/Camp Ocala 4-H Center sign. Center will be on the right about 1/2 mi.



Our 2012 Meeting Student Raffle:

Please help get donations for our February 2012 Student Raffle:

The donations for our February 22 Raffle are coming in rather slowly. We still need volunteers to request donations from just about every area in the state. We all really enjoy the Raffle and what it does for our Students and Chapter, but it takes more than just a few of us to make it happen. **Getting donations is most often surprisingly easy and several of us would be glad to help you.** Janice Kerns of UF is seeking volunteers from the Gainesville area. Kerry Flaherty, our President-Elect, is looking for more volunteers around St. Petersburg and Tampa, as well as other areas. Alan Collins is organizing the overall effort to bring in donations and he is especially looking for more volunteers from Pensacola, Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Ocala, Fort Myers and Miami/the Keys. If you can spare a little time the next few weeks, please e-mail or call Alan Collins at lac96@bellsouth.net or 850-303-4434. **We would ALL appreciate it.**



Candidate Biographies for Upcoming Election for Florida Chapter Officers

(further nominations for President-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer will be provided at our 2012 annual meeting)

President-Elect:

Travis Tuten,

I am honored to be nominated for President-Elect of Florida Chapter AFS. I have been employed as a biological scientist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission out of the Gainesville Freshwater Fisheries Office for the past nine years. During this time, I received a Master of Science degree from the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences at the University of Florida. My work experiences have included a wide variety of projects at aquatic systems throughout Florida. I first attended a Florida Chapter meeting in 2004 and have been involved at the annual meetings since. For the past three years, I have enjoyed serving as the Chapter's Secretary-Treasurer. In my tenure as Secretary-Treasurer, I was able to learn and cooperatively execute the procedures necessary to run the Chapter's business side effectively. This position also made me extremely close with the Chapter's financial position and responsibilities. I understand the duties of the President-Elect position and if elected, I will strive to do the best job I can to help the Florida Chapter continue to run smoothly. I believe my experience as Secretary-Treasurer will help make this a smooth transition and will aim at organizing an outstanding 2013 Chapter meeting.

Secretary-Treasurer:

Cheree Steward,

The Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society has been a valuable organization to me since I entered the field of fisheries research. Our annual meetings provide a great place to find out what others are doing around the state, network and get input from colleagues and generally expand our vision. I am a fisheries biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute's Freshwater Fisheries Research Lab in Eustis. I received a BS in Biology from Florida State University, and a master's in Marine Biology from Florida Institute of Technology. I attended my first Florida Chapter meeting in Brooksville in 2004, presented a poster in 2005 and have attended every since. Every year I look forward to seeing everyone, and to hearing about all of the great fisheries science going on in our state. It takes a lot of work on the part of many people to make these meetings happen for us all, and I am interested in serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the Florida Chapter AFS to contribute to that effort.

Soliciting a New Shellcracker Newsletter Editor???

I would like to hand-over the responsibility of the Shellcracker newsletter editor to someone new, a position I have held for nearly three years. The editor is a voluntary position, approved by the chapter's officers. The newsletter is issued on a quarterly basis and the primary responsibilities include: soliciting a feature article, and acquiring the president's message and student research highlight. If you are interested in taking over responsibility for our Shellcracker newsletter please let one of our officers or me (kevin.johnson@myfwc.com) know. Thanks!

Reminder for Award Nominations!?!

The Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Florida Chapter's, Outstanding Achievement and Rich Cailteux Awards. Send nominations to Eric Nagid (eric.nagid@myfwc.com) by January 13, 2012. Applications should be limited to one page, but descriptive enough to convey why the individual is deserving of the award. Nomination letters should outline the accomplishments of the individual that meet the criteria of each award below.

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.

Student Sub-Unit News

The Florida Chapter Student Sub-Unit elects new officers each year for President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. So, if you are a student and are planning on attending this year's annual meeting, please consider running for one of these positions.

For questions about their responsibilities please contact Matt Badolato at triplehelix@mail.com

Student Section

Student Research Highlight

College grads brave the high seas in search of science

By Matt Badolato, Student Sub-Unit President

Instead of looking for jobs in their home state, two Florida Institute of Technology grads are doing things a little different.

Brevard County residents John Fisher and Karen Vaughan will be spending the coming months aboard fishing boats in Alaska's Bering Sea. And they're there for the science.

Working as fisheries observers, they will live aboard fishing vessels based out of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, collecting data on various fish species for the National Marine Fisheries Service. Leaving from the home port of the Discovery Channel's hit show, "Deadliest Catch", these Florida-raised scientists may be on the arctic seas for up to three weeks at a time.

Fisher, a 23-year old oceanography major, left for Dutch Harbor in September. This is his second season working as an observer. Last year he spent three months working on pollock trawlers, big boats that drag nets near the bottom in deep water.

"I had to learn a completely new set of fish species," said Fisher, who enjoys surfing, fishing and diving for lobster when he's home in Indialantic. "It's amazing how different the fish are on the other side of the continent."

Each Alaskan fishing and crabbing ship is required to employ an observer, whose job is to collect data and keep track of the fishing progress for the NMFS. An observer's duties include identifying the number of prohibited species thrown back, counting fish, weighing and sexing them and taking samples of fish otoliths—their ear bones.

"Right now we are fishing for Kamchatka and arrowtooth flounder, which are big and mean looking. Some of the flounder weigh twenty-five pounds," Fisher said. "The fishermen are dragging nets along the bottom, sometimes as deep as 900 feet. There's some amazing physics to it."

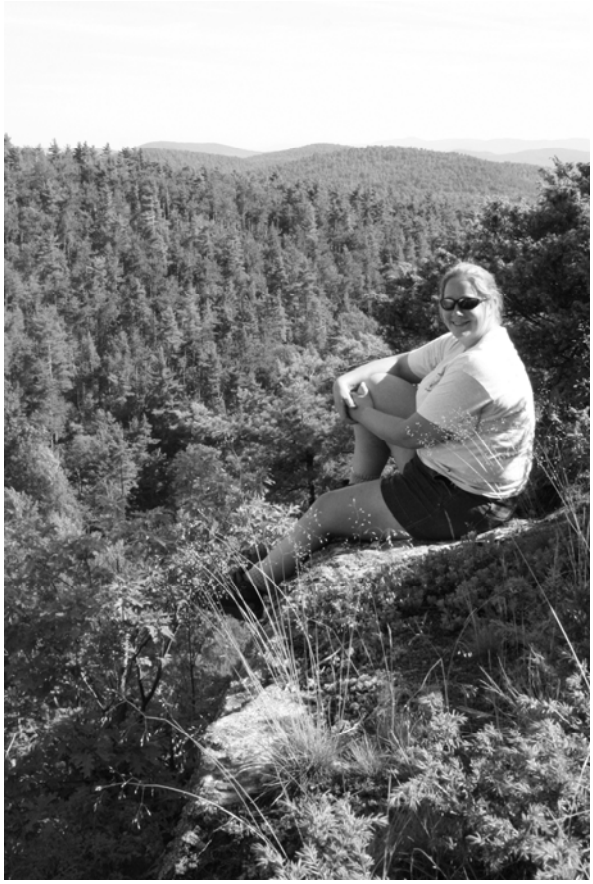
Fisher—who was able to interview via satellite internet aboard the 290-foot processing ship he is working on—says he's been in some pretty rough seas on the Bering since starting his job.

"Sometimes when the wind is blowing hard and the seas have kicked up to fifteen or twenty feet, it's like boating up and down a mountain," he said. "Imagine a strong outgoing tide at Sebastian Inlet, but as tall as a house."

Seasickness was a trepidation Fisher had before departing, but he managed to get his sea legs under him and quickly adapted to the high seas. He says he only feels seasick when the seas are calmer and the swells give the ship a steady rocking motion.

"This boat I'm on now rolls relentlessly, so I've really got to get my inner ear in tune with its movement. The boat was built in the sixties. You can get a feel for its age by the old safety placards on the walls describing what to do during an atomic bomb attack."

When he returns home in May, Fisher says the first things he'll do is give his girlfriend, Katie, a big hug and then go check the waves at his favorite beach access in Indialantic.



Karen Vaughan, a 28-year old Melbourne resident who earned her Bachelor's degree in Ecology from FIT in 2005, left for Anchorage, Alaska this month. She'll be training for three weeks before flying to Dutch Harbor, now one of the busiest fishing ports in the world.

"My advisor in college informed me about the observer opportunity when I told him I wanted to do research in the Indian Ocean," said Vaughan. "The Indian Ocean is why I wanted to become a biologist. In high school I learned about the supposedly endangered coelacanth, a lobe-finned fish. When I heard that some fishing vessels were catching them off Madagascar, it dawned on me that the ocean is a really undiscovered place!"

Knowing that other, more exotic research vessels would be more apt to hire her with some "sea-time" under her belt, Vaughan applied for the Alaska job and got it.

She's no stranger to science. Vaughan has worked for several years with the St. John's River Water Management District as a biologist monitoring seagrasses in the Indian River Lagoon.

"Some people have looked at me like I'm completely crazy for wanting this experience," Vaughan said. "But the inner child in me is fearless and wants to prove that I can do it. I'm looking forward to the adventure. I will miss my friends and family tremendously."

Vaughan, who will also be working on the Bering Sea, says she doesn't know how she'll react to the cold temperatures, lack of sun and rough seas.

"Hopefully with some dignity and a smile on my face!" she said. "I love not knowing what will happen next."