American Fisheries Society
Genetics Section Hall of Excellence

Dr. Eric Hallerman

Dr. Eric Hallerman received his Ph.D. in 1984 from Auburn University, studying dynamics of genetic markers in selected strains of channel catfish. Eric has been a Professor of Fisheries Science at Virginia Tech since 1989, where he served as Department Head from 2007 to 2013, taught eight different university courses, advised or co-advised dozens of graduate and undergraduate students, and mentored many other students in his genetics laboratory. Hundreds of students have learned about fisheries genetics through one or more of his four genetics-oriented courses, which range from principles of genetics to aquaculture genetics to applied conservation genetics. Eric edited a textbook that AFS published in 2003 entitled Population Genetics: Principles and Applications for Fisheries Scientists. This book brought together the scientific knowledge of the time in an accessible format for students and is still AFS's standard population genetic text. In addition to his work as an educator, Eric and his students have made important scientific contributions to genetic improvement of aquaculture species such as tilapia, Rainbow Trout, oysters, and numerous finfish and shellfish species, genetically-informed management of sport and commercial species, including Walleye, Brook Trout, and horseshoe crabs, and conservation genetics and phylogenetics of imperiled freshwater fishes and mussels. His research on fishes and mussels has fundamentally shaped our understanding of southeastern aquatic species, helping agency biologists delineate appropriate taxonomic and management units, design appropriate propagation programs, and prioritize populations for restoration activities. For decades, Eric has served as a technical expert and international ambassador on fish biotechnology, guiding policy on genetic improvement of aquaculture organisms and the assessment and management of risks from the genetic engineering of such organisms.

Elected to the Genetics Section, Hall of Excellence, 2021