



# ONCORHYNCHUS

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter, American Fisheries Society  
Vol. XXXV Summer 2015 No. 3

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Zambian farmer cleaning his freshly-harvested fish before sale on the pond bank. Photo by Joe Sullivan.

## Fisheries in the Peace Corps with Tilapia, War Zones, and Ebola An Alaskan's Tributary off the Main Stream

Joe Sullivan

We never know where our future will take us until we have been there. Like many of you, I've always enjoyed working with fish and had a career with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). My positions wound through several divisions of ADF&G, first Fisheries Rehabilitation, Enhancement, and Development, then Oil Spill Impact Assessment and Restoration, and, finally, Habitat. But long before I ever thought of moving to Alaska, I had wanted to use fish culture in the Peace Corps to teach people how to feed themselves. While life intervened and I wound up in Alaska, my Peace Corps dream was never forgotten. So when the Peace Corps called a month before my 1998 retirement from ADF&G and asked where I wanted to go, I responded, "Any place warmer than here!"

A year later found me in Zambia, Africa where I taught small-scale farmers how to build fish ponds using only a hoe, a wheelbarrow, some string, a line level and sticks, and how to raise Tilapia using garden wastes, chicken manure, and tree leaves. Fast forward 15 years and I still work periodically in Africa and Asia, but have added raceways, concrete tanks, net pens, and volcanic calderas to the mix of rearing containers. The mix of fishes also expanded to include African Sharptooth Catfish, Indian carps, Chinese carps, sturgeons, Rainbow Trout, Sevan Trout, and more. The Peace Corps Rural Aquaculture Promotion project I was part of in Zambia is still going, though perhaps under a different name to integrate it with farming. If you don't know how to culture Tilapia, the Peace Corps' training program will teach you. Two years in a mud hut and getting around on a mountain bike is quite the experience and much, much better than it might sound.

After returning to the United States and wrapping up my Peace Corps duties, my ex-supervisor at the Peace Corps asked me to start a newsletter and to contact the Peace Corps liaison regarding an

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## The President's Corner

Jennifer Stahl

Summer in Alaska brings long days and lots of time outdoors. For fisheries biologists, that warm weather translates to the field season. Streams get snorkeled, fish get tagged, and weirs go up. I work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) groundfish project. For our group, this time is when we perform assessment surveys: we collect video data of Yelloweye Rockfish



Jennifer Stahl, AFS Alaska Chapter President.

using an ROV to estimate stock densities; we longline for Sablefish to obtain catch-per-unit-effort and biological data; and we tag thousands of Sablefish as part of a mark-recapture study to estimate their abundance. Although field work across the state comes in all shapes and sizes, with gear ranging from ROVs to seines and with sampling sites from the intertidal to deep water fjords, Alaskan scientists share the unique opportunity to observe a natural world that has not been explored by many. When you are out in the field this season, take it all in and go the extra mile to investigate and share your discoveries with others.

Examine species or collect data that are not the focus of your project. When time allows, cut open a fish stomach and see what was eaten. Such exploration could lead to new findings or knowledge of the ecosystem. For example, ADF&G biologist Aaron Baldwin has collected invertebrates that are captured or hitch a ride on pot gear during Sablefish tagging surveys. At the end of the day, he photographs and catalogs species that he doesn't recognize. Recording this information has led to identification of new deep water invertebrate species and range extensions for others. A guide to the common seashore animals in Southeast Alaska developed by

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## Peace Corps Fisheries, continued

article on the Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program operated by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The F2F program sends agricultural volunteers to other countries to assist with approaches to enhance the incomes of farmers; mechanisms may include production techniques, forming cooperatives, marketing, budgeting, etc., and aquaculture is certainly a part of the process. I contacted the F2F liaison and thought, what the heck, I'll just include my resume. The liaison thought, what the heck, he'd just forward the resume to non-governmental organizations (NGO's) that find F2F volunteers. A few months later I was headed to Tajikistan to help them recover from the destruction of their hatcheries after the Taliban had come through, similar to the Taliban destruction in Afghanistan (the two countries share a thousand-mile border). The Russians cleared the Taliban from Tajikistan, but not before the Taliban shot and killed several fish culturists. Those culturists were buried where they fell on the pond banks, with sun-bleached rags on sticks now marking their graves, while many of the remaining culturists returned to Russia. Because some of the fish culture occurs in areas fed by glacial streams emerging from the Pamirs, a mountain range contiguous with the Himalayas, the rivers are cold with some trout ponds full of glacial flour. Carp hatcheries even rely on warm-up ponds to raise water temperatures high enough for rearing.

Trips to other countries in Asia and Africa followed, but often conflict of some sort seemed to be part of why I was there. A month after my second trip to the Republic of Georgia, the Russians invaded exactly where I had been, and on my third trip you could see the Russian Army barracks from the trout hatchery where I was helping resolve a gas bubble disease problem. We hear about Ukraine now, but the Russians still occupy about 25% of Georgia. Islamic militants were active in the north of Mali when I was there in 2011, with things intensifying later until the French army intervened. Once again, I was teaching people how to build Tilapia ponds that would not leak and they were so happy with their results they now call this type of pond *l'etang de Sullivan* — cool,  
*Continued on page 4*

### The President's Corner, continued

Aaron can assist you with your own studies: <http://www.naturebob.com/sites/default/files/Common%20seashore%20animals%20of%20Southeastern%20Alaska%208%20by%20Aaron%20Baldwin.pdf>.

Photograph or film your work. It is easy these days to take great photos with inexpensive digital cameras that have waterproof or shockproof options. GoPros are a great and inexpensive way to record video on the surface and underwater. Photographs and films can be shared with other scientists. A picture is worth a thousand words in many cases and can confirm species identification, or a video clip could demonstrate a behavior not commonly observed. Film and video can also be shown to the public to demonstrate the importance of research. At the Alaska Chapter AFS meeting in October 2014, a wonderful group of films were submitted to the film festival hosted by Southeast Alaska fish Habitat Partnership; many of these films will be traveling to Portland in August 2015 for the Parent Society/Western Division meeting. Another film festival is in the works for the November 2015 Alaska Chapter meeting in Homer (contact Mary Beth Loewen, [Marybeth.loewen@alaska.gov](mailto:Marybeth.loewen@alaska.gov) if interested in coordinating or contributing). In addition, there are a number of local film festivals where videos can be submitted. In Juneau, the JUMP Society (<http://jumpsociety.org/>) hosts biannual film festivals to encourage the community to make videos.

Take good field notes. It is important to document data collection and observations

clearly. This allows for data to be translated into meaningful analyses and reports. In the past, data were often used to make management decisions only in the upcoming year. However, now data may be used in longer time series with old data being resurrected. It is also important to document unusual occurrences, such as species observed outside of their normal range, which may occur during El Niño but could help predict range extensions with ocean warming.

If you are not lucky enough to have field work scheduled for this summer, look for volunteer or cross-training opportunities. There are graduate projects and other field work that rely on volunteers. As a graduate student, I was able to assist in collecting marine botany data in Prince William Sound as part of the Census of Life study. This memorable trip exposed me to a different area of the state, new sampling techniques, and organisms that I otherwise would have not had the opportunity to observe.

Normally I wouldn't encourage people to take their work home with them; however, this summer, I suggest you not limit your field observations to your job. Get out there and be a citizen scientist and walk in the footsteps of John Muir. Record the world around you while out fishing or hiking, and maybe even try exploring Alaska in a new way, such as by kayak, paddleboard, or snorkel. Check the tides and go out tide pooling. We live in an amazing state, so get out there and explore it! Who knows what you will find. 🐞

## Call for Sessions — 42nd Annual Meeting of the AFS AK Chapter

Session topics are being solicited for this meeting, to be held November 2–6, 2015 in Homer, AK. The meeting will feature concurrent sessions focused on Habitat, Economy, and Management. Session chairs are encouraged to develop themes which encompass multiple species or disciplines, and encourage presentation of long-term datasets. Broad session topics allow session chairs to meld the topics into focal aspects of sustainability, habitat, management, and economy, even outside of a particular focus species. Please contact [Marybeth.loewen@alaska.gov](mailto:Marybeth.loewen@alaska.gov) for session suggestions. 🐞

## Alaska Ocean Observing System Film Contest

The AOOS is hosting its second annual Ocean Film Contest and is seeking short films highlighting Alaska's coast or oceans. Films of any genre relating to the ocean (e.g., people using the ocean and coast, marine research, marine wildlife, or ocean-related policy issues) are welcome. Submission deadline is September 15, with contest winners to be announced by October 15, 2015. For more information, go to <http://www.aos.org/film-contest/>. 🐞

## Peace Corps Fisheries, continued



*A trout pond full of glacial flour is fed by glacial streams emerging from the Pamirs, a mountain range contiguous with the Himalayas. Photo by Joe Sullivan.*

huh? In Kyrgyzstan, I was working with trout net pen culture in Lake Issyk Kul where the Soviet Union had conducted naval warfare testing. In Nigeria, I had to change the venue for a men-only Tilapia workshop because of nearby activity by Boko Haram, a group whose name translates to “Western Education is Forbidden.” Far and away, however, the most challenging has been Liberia. Liberian people are absolutely wonderful, and I would be happy to go back to help again and again, but they have suffered a terrible civil war complete with child soldiers, blood diamonds (some extracted from under a pond we renovated), and other atrocities. Shot up buildings can still be seen in the capital, Monrovia, and the United Nations peacekeepers are everywhere throughout

the country. I have made four trips to Liberia now, mainly teaching Tilapia and African Sharptooth Catfish culture, but also how to preserve fish through canning, smoking, freezing and other techniques I learned here in Alaska, particularly through the Alaska Sea Grant programs. What works for salmon can also work for Tilapia and catfishes. One farmer I helped saw his income from fish farming go from \$150 to \$7,000/year, a lot of money in Liberia! That farmer’s success attracted attention from the Liberian national government, the United Nations, USAID (who pays for my trips), and others. See: <http://thenewslib.com/news/highlights/2294-shalom-conducts-first-organic-aqua-harvest>.

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## Peace Corps Fisheries, continued

I just returned from Liberia, being the first F2F volunteer in-country since the end of the Ebola crisis. Most recently I was helping a community college with an aquaculture program by teaching some of the same things taught to Zambian farmers 15 years earlier. Because of an interest in African Sharptooth Catfish, I also showed the Liberians how to drill fish heads to remove the pituitaries to induce spawning. Returning to the U.S., I was flagged by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) when passing through U.S. Customs in Atlanta. They gave me a free phone, a thermometer, and protocol to follow for the next three weeks. Instruction were to take my temperature and check in with the Health Department twice a day to make sure I didn't have Ebola. While I did not have Ebola, it was still an interesting process. In September, I head back to Nigeria to help another college set up an aquaculture program. That will be my 18<sup>th</sup> F2F "gig" and I still love it.



*An example of drilling carp heads to extract the pituitary as an mechanism to induce spawning. Photo from Joe Sullivan.*

Every F2F project wants to know how it is empowering women and one particular project in Bangladesh was focused entirely on such empowerment. The idea was that women fish farmers could gain some financial independence from their male relatives through the money earned by women's fish harvesting. That part

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*Stocking the pond with Tilapia after a blessing at the Mariachiedza Monastery, Zimbabwe. Photo by Joe Sullivan.*

## Peace Corps Fisheries, continued

of Bangladesh was so flat that ponds were dug straight down. The excavated dirt became the elevated foundations to keep houses above water when the floods came. Fences were built around the ponds to retain the fish during the floods. But even landless women could raise fish in net pens in the river, as this women's cooperative was doing.

So the question is, are you contemplating a new adventure, wanting to apply your skills in a new realm, or perhaps retired but not ready to call it quits? Have so much excess leave you couldn't retire until you're 80 if you stopped working today? Like busman's holidays? Might I suggest volunteering with the USAID's Farmer-Farmer-to-Farmer program? Not a farmer? Neither am I, but I do know a bit about aquaculture and there are a lot of fish farmers in the developing nations who want that information. And fish culture is not the only skill set of interest. Interested in helping out with the management of some artisanal fisheries? Do you know something about business administration, budgeting, microfinance, or marketing? Since 2002, this Alaskan and former ADF&G employee has completed 17 F2F assignments in Africa and Asia with the 18<sup>th</sup> coming in September in Nigeria. I am having a blast and maybe changing the world a little tiny bit. But I shouldn't be the only one having all the fun. Go to the USAID F2F website at <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/agriculture-and-food-security/supporting-agricultural-capacity-development/john-ogonowski>. Follow the hot links to the NGOs that provide volunteers and send in your resume. Although you don't get a salary, USAID covers all travel and per diem expenses. I have

worked with four NGOs, all good organizations that treat volunteers very well. Do recognize that the assignments are in developing nations and can sometimes be a little "rugged." You can always say "No," but saying "Yes" is usually a better idea and can change the world.

*Joe Sullivan obtained a B.S in Biology and a PhD in Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture before working for 19 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Since 1998 Joe has been involved in fisheries issues, education, and training at state, national, and international levels. When not overseas, Joe splits his time between Anchorage, Alaska and Piedmont, Oklahoma with his wife of 45 years.*

## Continuing Education Workshops

*Sara E. Miller and Katie J. Palof*

The Continuing Education Committee has lined up three great workshops to be provided November 1-3, 2015 in association with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in Homer, AK. The workshops are: Power-Based Standardization in Electrofishing (half-day workshop); Fisheries Technology, a workshop that focuses on Alaskan Fisheries Techniques and Introduction to Alaskan Aquaculture (three-day workshop); and Communicating Science through Video (one-day workshop).

All Continuing Education classes have a minimum enrollment that must be met by October 23, so be sure to sign up early. Fees are also reduced for early registration. Additional information and registration forms can be found at <http://www.afs-alaska.org/annual-meetings/fall-2015>.

## Photo Contest — Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Cover

Each year, the ADF&G, Sport Fish Division sponsors a cover photo contest for the Southcentral, Bristol Bay, Kodiak, Southeast and Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim/Upper Copper-Upper Susitna Fishing Regulations Summary booklets. A youth you know could be on the cover next year! To be considered for the cover, the primary person in the photo must be under the age of 18 when the photo was taken and the photo must have been taken in Alaska. Photos that represent what sport fishing means to young people are being sought. Both the

youth and the photographer will be credited inside the cover. Because photos are for the covers of the SPORT FISHING regulations summaries, only images depicting or resulting from recreational fishing with hook and line/rod & reel will be considered.

Entries must be received by, or emailed to, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game no later than 5 p.m. October 1. For more information go to [http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=news.sfregs\\_photo\\_contest](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=news.sfregs_photo_contest).

## Student Subunit Happenings

### Morgan Sparks

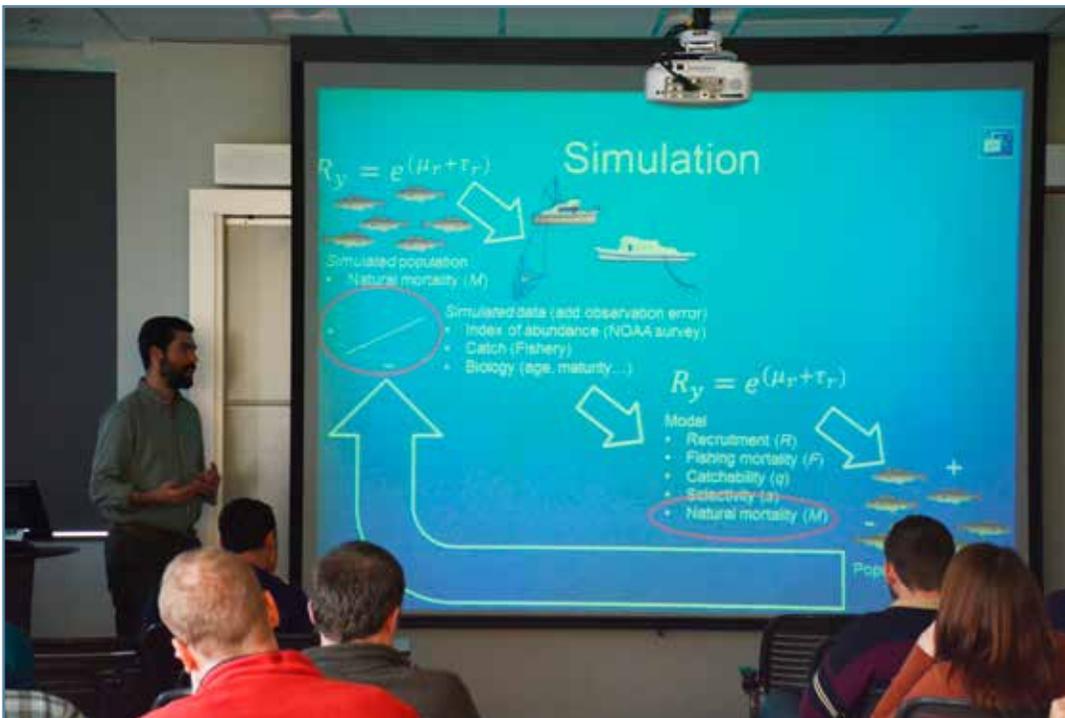
Spring for Alaska AFS students means the end of school, the start of field work, and the spring student symposium. On April 19, students from Juneau, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Kodiak participated by video conferencing in the 19<sup>th</sup> Alaska AFS Student Symposium. The symposium allowed Alaska AFS students to showcase research to their peers and other interested individuals. Subjects ranged from using Lake Trout otoliths as biochronological tools in the Arctic to Saffron Cod population structure in the North Pacific and Arctic Oceans. Of the 21 total presentations, five were “short” (~ 7 minutes) and 16 were “long” (~12 minutes) with several awards with cash prizes given out. The Alaska AFS Chapter provided three \$50 awards for best long presentation to Noel Sme (Juneau, M.S. student), Suzie Teerlink (Juneau, Ph.D. student), and Kevin Fraley (Fairbanks, M.S. student), and one \$50 award for best short presentation to Katie Sechrist (Anchorage, M.S. student). In addition, the St. Hubert Research Group provided one \$100 award for best introduction to Jane Sullivan (Juneau, M.S. student), with two \$25 runner-up awards going to Casey McConnell (Juneau, M.S. student) and Wendel Raymond (Juneau, Ph.D. student).



Jane Sullivan with \$100 prize from St. Hubert Research Group for best introduction at the 2015 AFS Student Symposium.

Photo from Jane Sullivan.

The UAF-Fairbanks student subunit held a barbeque at Badger Slough near North Pole to catch Arctic Grayling and celebrate the end of the school year. The group hosted visiting lecturer, Kurt Fausch (Colorado State University), at the event,



Phil Ganz presents his research to attendees at the 2015 AFS Student Symposium. Photo by Jane Sullivan.

as well as many other staff and professors from the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. In June, the Fairbanks students also hosted the Fly Fishing Film Tour on campus as a student fundraiser. The three-hour event showcased short to medium length films related to fly fishing and fisheries conservation. More than 35 people, including students and community members, attended the event. As a trial run,

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## Student Subunit Happenings, continued

the successful event represented a promising initial step toward more permanent fundraising for the students. Apart from the Fairbanks student subunit, other subunits stayed busy finishing up coursework and preparing for summer field work.

Finally, the UAF-Fairbanks student subunit was recently awarded the AFS Western Division's Outstanding Student Subunit Award for their activities during the 2014–2015 academic year! The subunit also won the award in the 2012–2013 year. Kevin Fraley, the subunit's outgoing president, will accept the award at the parent society meeting in Portland, OR on August 18, 2015. 🐾

## 2015 Annual Meeting of the AFS Alaska Chapter in Homer

### Mary Beth Loewen, President-Elect and Program Chair

The 42<sup>nd</sup> annual AFS Alaska Chapter meeting will be held November 2–6, 2015 in Homer, AK. The primary meeting venue will be the Alaska Islands & Oceans Visitor Center (AIOVC), headquarters to the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and also home to the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve. The meeting will emphasize the importance of cross-disciplinary thinking, improving connections with other fisheries professionals, and heightened awareness of new fisheries paradigms, whether they be habitat loss or alterations in migration patterns due to climate change, development of innovative new techniques or application of traditional methodologies in new places, or unforeseen budget constraints leading to creative problem-solving. Especially in the current state budget climate, fisheries professionals don't go to conferences to hear someone read a paper that they could just as easily download online. The Homer conference is an opportunity for face-to-face contact with your colleagues, to build relationships with potential collaborators, and to make connections that inspire new research and new approaches to old problems. We want attendees to come away feeling invigorated and enriched, more informed about the state of fisheries research and management around the state, and with new knowledge to apply to their own work.

Some dates to remember when planning your attendance: abstract deadline for contributed talks and posters - October 2; Cultural Diversity Travel Award application deadline - October 9; Molly Ahlgren Scholarship Award application deadline - October 9; Early Conference Registration deadline - October 9; and last day to pre-register - October 29.

Some of the local accommodations include: Best Western Bidarka Inn (\$89/night and walking distance); Driftwood Inn (\$60–\$180/night and

walking distance); Lands End Resort (\$85–\$120/night, driving distance, and the meeting banquet venue); and numerous B&Bs ([http://www.alaskaone.com/\\_travel/homer/lodging/](http://www.alaskaone.com/_travel/homer/lodging/)).

Homer is a picturesque drive of about 220 miles and 4 hours from Anchorage. RAVN Airlines, a partner of Alaska Airline, makes multiple daily flights to Homer. The Homer Stage Line makes a daily shuttle trip between Anchorage and Homer. Rental cars and taxis are available in Homer. A shuttle service will be provided from AIOVC to Land's End Resort for the banquet Thursday evening.

The meeting banquet, always a highlight with guest speakers, recognition of award recipients, live and silent auctions, and live music, will be held Thursday night, November 5. Banquet speakers will be Hig Higman and Erin McKittrick (<http://49faces.com/people/katmai-lituya-erin-and-hig/>; <http://www.groundtruthtrekking.org/>). Banquet music will be Tyson and the Hot Strangs.

A variety of activities and social events are still under development to accommodate people's interests and schedules in terms of participating in continuing education workshops and, of course, the main meeting. For example, Tuesday will feature Learn-to-Curl on the ice at the Kevin Bell Arena in the afternoon and an evening opening reception at the Pratt Museum, Wednesday evening will feature a social at Alice's Champagne Palace, and Thursday includes a 5k afternoon run and the evening banquet. Tours of the Homer Brewery, the Bear Creek Winery, and the USF&WS vessel *R/V Tiglax* will be provided based on interest.

If you have suggestions, comments, or wishes, please contact Program Chair Mary Beth Loewen (ph: 942-5273, [marybethloewen@gmail.com](mailto:marybethloewen@gmail.com)). For updated information, go to the Chapter website at <http://www.afs-alaska.org/>. 🐾

## Juneau Students in GENIUS Olympiad

Juneau-Douglas High School students Laurinne Balstad, Raven Ward, and Helena Wayne attended the GENIUS Olympiad science fair at Oswego, NY during June 14–19, 2015. The GENIUS Olympiad is an international high school competition hosted by State University of New York and focused on environmental issues. Of 1,171 applicant projects from around the world in 2015, 401 projects (262 from the United States) were selected for presentation as finalists in Oswego. The JDHS student projects advanced to GENIUS Olympiad after being selected as finalists at the Southeast Alaska Regional Science Fair on March 6–8, 2015.



Laurinne Balstad received a Gold Medal at the GENIUS Olympiad

Raven Ward, Laurinne Balstad, and Helena Wayne, Juneau-Douglas High School students, at the GENIUS Olympiad international science competition. Photo by Liz Balstad.

for her project “Potential Recovery of Tanner Crabs from Bitter Crab Disease in Alaska.” Although bitter crab disease is assumed to be fatal, Laurinne found the disease was undetectable in 30% of infected crabs by the end of the experiment, a result important to Tanner crab management. The project was a collaborative effort between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the NOAA/Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) in Juneau, AK and Seattle, WA. Laurinne was mentored by Dr. Elizabeth Siddon of the National Research Council and NOAA/AFSC and advised by Dr. Christopher Siddon of ADF&G.

Raven Ward and Helena Wayne received an Honorable Mention for their project “How Does Habitat Affect Aggression Levels in Red King

Crabs (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*).” Under the guidance of Dr. Ginny Eckert of the University of Alaska Fairbanks - Juneau Center, Raven and Helena investigated the behavior of juvenile red king crab in different habitats; results suggested that small crab held in more complex habitats may move less. 🐞

### ONCORHYNCHUS

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Deadline for materials for the next issue of *Oncorhynchus* is September 10.

## Meetings and Events



### 145th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society

August 16–20, 2015: This meeting will be held in Portland, Oregon. For more information, see <http://2015.fisheries.org/>.

### Annual Conference of the Alaska Chapter of American Statistical Association

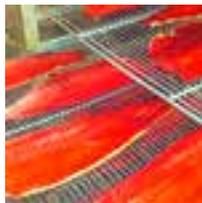


August 25–27, 2015: This conference, to be held in Anchorage, will feature a two-day workshop

“Generalized Additive Models and Their Extensions: the Penalized Regression Spline Approach in R” (Simon Wood of the University of Bath). For more information, visit *2015 AK ASA Meeting*. The conference contact is Anna-Marie Benson, [Anna-Marie\\_Benson@fws.gov](mailto:Anna-Marie_Benson@fws.gov).

### Smoking Seafood Workshop

October 7–9, 2015: This workshop on smoking seafood, for either home or commercial production, will be held at the Kodiak Seafood and Marine Science Center in Kodiak. More information is at <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/map/workshops/2015/smoking-seafood/>.



### Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit VI

January 27–29, 2016: This meeting is designed to provide information and opportunities to harvesters under age 40 or in the business less than five years. For more information contact Torie Baker, [torie.baker@alaska.edu](mailto:torie.baker@alaska.edu).

### World Fisheries Congress 2016

May 23–27, 2016: This, the 7<sup>th</sup> World Fisheries Congress, will be held in Busan, South Korea. For more information, go to [http://www.wfc2016.or.kr/english/main/index\\_en.asp](http://www.wfc2016.or.kr/english/main/index_en.asp).

### AFS memberships may be renewed online

<http://fisheries.org>

### Back issues of Oncorhynchus can be found online

<http://www.afs-alaska.org/newsletter>

## 2014 Alaska Chapter Officers

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**Feel free to contact the Executive Committee members.**