

TIDEWATER PRESS

NEWSLETTER OF THE
TIDEWATER CHAPTER OF THE
AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY



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Inside this issue:

- President's Corner 1-2
- Treasurer's Report 2
- Annual Meeting Highlights 3
- 2016 Chapter Awards 4-5
- 2017 Eileen Setzler-Hamilton
Scholarship 6
- Meet Our President-Elect7
- State Updates7-10
- Student Subunit Updates11
- Annual Meeting Save-the-Date12
- Sign Up for Our LISTSERV!12

President's Corner | *Sally Roman*

Hello Tidewater Chapter members! I hope everyone has had a busy and successful summer. I have, myself, been out to sea most of the summer surveying the sea scallop resource off the U.S. East Coast aboard commercial scallop fishing vessels. Based on research presented at the 2017 chapter annual meeting, I can only image that members were out in force this summer, too—tagging, counting, tracking—likely also back in the lab crunching numbers.



The chapter held its 31st Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach, Va. on March 9-11, 2017. Thanks to all who attended! The Chesapeake Bay Foundation was gracious enough to host the meeting at the Brock Environmental Center. The Thursday evening poster social, as well as Friday and Saturday talks, were held at the Center. The annual awards

banquet was held Friday evening at the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center. Virginia Aquarium staff provided a behind-the-scenes tour of the exhibits before dinner. Award

presentations followed dinner, as well as the silent auction and raffle prize drawings. A special thanks to all who made donations for the silent auction and raffle, especially to Laura Lee for bringing juvenile fish photos and scientific illustrations. There was a variety of topics presented

during the poster social, as well as during oral presentations. I think this range of topics highlights the diversity of research being conducted by our members and allows for members to become exposed to different areas of research within the marine science field when they attend and present at our

Continued on next page ►

**President's Corner,
continued from page 1**

annual meeting. Once more, I would like to give special thanks to all of the meeting sponsors, who provided generous donations of space, money, and supplies. Thanks also need to go to the Chapter Executive Committee members, as well as moderators and other meeting volunteers.

As many of you discovered when trying to find out more information about this past annual meeting, hacking brought down our website. Thanks to the tireless work of Chad Smith, our website is back up and running. But, we had to get a new domain name:

www.tidewater-afs.org. So, please remember to bookmark the new URL. The website already has information about our annual meeting slated for Jan. 25-27, 2018 in the Morehead City area, N.C.

We also needed to migrate our listserv over to a platform used by the parent society. Thanks go to Scott Baker for stepping up this first year to assist with the transition off the East Carolina University system. Scott sent out an email in early June to all members he has added to-date. If you did not receive that "test" email and would like to be added to the listserv, please contact Scott at bakers@uncw.edu. Members can post to the list by sending an email

to tidewater@afsmembers.org.

President-Elect Paul Rudershausen and members of the Buckel lab are hard at work fleshing out additional details of our 2018 annual meeting; more information will come via the listserv. I am sure it will be a great success! If you have suggestions or wish to make a contribution in some way — volunteer, sponsor, donate raffle items—contact Paul at paul_rudershausen@ncsu.edu. Also on the horizon is the Southern Division meeting, which will be in San Juan, PR in March of 2018.

I wish you all a great fall and hope to see everyone at our next annual meeting, if not sooner!



Treasurer's Report | Stephanie McInerny

A total of \$8,100 was spent on the meeting, and we made \$918 from the meeting. The positive meeting budget was made possible by a successful raffle (~\$500 in raffle proceeds) and a \$200 donation from Checkered Flag Toyota that came in after the meeting. There were 74 meeting attendees.

The checking account balance reflects payments of \$1,474 in deposits to vendors for the upcoming annual meeting in January, \$45.36 for DotEasy set up for the new website, and \$4.90 for stamps, as well a deposit of \$514 from the AFS Parent Society for Tidewater dues. A check for \$40.80 from AFS for our dues rebates (a portion of the parent society dues for each Tidewater member) still needs to be deposited.

Annual dues for 2017 are \$10.00. If you are reading this and currently are not a member of the AFS Tidewater Chapter, or if you are a member still needing to renew for 2017, a membership form can be found on the Chapter website. Or, email me at: Stephanie.McInerny@ncdenr.gov.

A lifetime membership is available for a one-time fee of \$150.00 and should be sent to:

Stephanie McInerny
AFS Tidewater Treasurer
209 Brigantine Ct.
Cape Carteret, NC 28584

Please make checks payable to
"Tidewater Chapter AFS."

Current Financial Report

Checking:	\$15,454.91
Mutual Fund:	\$1,840.30
Total:	\$17,295.21



Student Presentations Carry Fruitful Annual Meeting | Sara Mirabilio

Student presentations once again carried a successful American Fisheries Society Tidewater Chapter annual meeting. A total of 27 presentations—13 posters and 14 oral papers—were evaluated and scored by six volunteer judges. Cash awards were presented during the awards banquet held the evening of March 10, 2017 at the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center in Virginia Beach, Va.

In the poster category, the judges selected these winners:

-First Place (\$150): Gail Schwieterman, a doctoral student under Rich Brill, adjunct faculty at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science / College of William & Mary's School of Marine Science, for her research on the influence of acute temperature changes on the metabolic scope and hypoxia tolerance of clearnose skates (*Raja elganteria*) under rising temperatures.

-Second Place (\$100): Kathryn Doering, a master's student under Mike Wilberg at the Center for Environmental Science / Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, University of Maryland, for her research on improving a natural mortality estimator for the eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) with applications in the Patuxent River, Md.

-Third Place (\$50): This year, there was a tie between two student presenters - Lisa

Hollensead and Ginni La Rosa. The Chapter Executive Committee agreed to award both students prize monies.

Lisa Hollensead, a doctoral student under Fred Scharf, faculty within the Department of Biology and Marine Biology, University of North Carolina Wilmington, received the third-place poster award for research estimating seasonal activity space for southern flounder (*Paralichthys lethostigma*) with an assessment of sampling error associated with acoustic tracking methods.

Ginni La Rosa is a master's student under Ryan Woodland at the Center for Environmental Science / Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, University of Maryland, and received third-place poster for her research on

spatial and temporal gradients of black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*) diet and condition in the Mid-Atlantic Bight.

Oral presenters were equally as talented, and in the student oral paper category, the judges selected these winners:

-First Place (\$150): William Goldsmith, a doctoral student co-advised by John Graves and Andrew Scheld at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science / College of William & Mary's School of Marine Science, for his research developing a mortality tag with an application to Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thynnus thynnus*).

-Second Place (\$100): Verena Wang, also a doctoral student under Fred Scharf, for her research estimating southern flounder population (*Paralichthys lethostigma*) connectivity using otolith geochemistry.

-Third Place (\$50): Brendan Runde, a doctoral student under Jeff Buckel, faculty within the Department of Applied Ecology at North Carolina State University, for his research estimating delayed mortality of gray triggerfish (*Balistes capriscus*) using surface and bottom tags.

Changes to the scoring, as well as presentation timings for oral paper and posters, will be happening in 2018. Stay tuned for information, which will be posted on the chapter website. And again, a special "thank you" to our six volunteer judges!



Photo credit: Cheryl Teagle

Awards and Scholarship Committee chair, Sara Mirabilio, presents Gail Schwieterman with Best Student Poster Award at the American Fisheries Society Tidewater Chapter annual meeting awards banquet held the evening of March 10, 2017 at the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

2016 Chapter Awards; Call For 2017 Nominations | Sara Mirabilio

Each year, the American Fisheries Society (AFS) Tidewater Chapter chooses to honor professionals or conservation organizations making a significant impact to the chapter or to the field of marine fisheries science by-and-large. Three special recognition awards are available for presenting at the chapter annual meeting: Excellence in Fisheries Education, Meritorious Service, and Conservation. The Awards and Scholarship Committee made presentations to two deserving individuals - Drs. Robert J. Latour and James A. Wesson - during the chapter business meeting held late afternoon on March 10, 2017 at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach, Va.

The **Excellence in Fisheries Education Award** is given to an individual who has achieved excellence in teaching and student advising in the field of fisheries science, or closely related curriculum, and who also encourages student participation in AFS, Tidewater Chapter, and other fisheries-related meetings.

The 2016 award recipient was Rob Latour, professor at the College of William & Mary's School of Marine Science at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, or VIMS. Though his career at VIMS has been relatively brief by faculty standards, Latour has achieved an extraordinarily prominent level of research and advisory service activities.

Latour currently is mentoring six



Photo credit: Cheryl Teagle

Awards and Scholarship Committee chair, Sara Mirabilio, presents Dr. Robert J. Latour with the 2016 Excellence in Fisheries Education Award at the American Fisheries Society Tidewater Chapter business meeting held on March 10, 2017 at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

graduate students, and has served on the committees of 34 other students. His dedication and effectiveness with students is evident in the success that his ten former students have had within the fisheries field; all have obtained competitive positions as university faculty, as federal and state fisheries employees, or as doctoral students at other eminent institutions.

In 2010, Rob received the Plumeri Award for Faculty Excellence from the College of William & Mary. The award empowers faculty to continue

to work passionately to challenge the minds of exceptional students. And in 2012, he received the Outstanding Faculty Advisory Service Award from VIMS. This is an alternating award given every three years to a faculty member who has excelled in teaching, research, or advisory service.

Latour's involvement with the AFS parent society and Tidewater Chapter is evidenced by numerous presentations given by his research lab at these professional meetings. Two of his students have received AFS awards, including the Tidewater Chapter's Eileen Setzler-Hamilton Memorial Scholarship (Andre Buchheister, 2013) and the Snieszko Student Travel Award from the AFS Fish Health Section (Carissa Gervasi, 2014).

Several of his students wrote together saying, "Dr. Latour served as our advisor for various masters and doctoral degrees, and he has had transformative and positive effects on our education and lives. He is an exceptional example of what a professor, mentor, and fisheries academic should be."

The **Conservation Award** is given to an individual, resource management agency, business or nonprofit organization that the Tidewater Chapter deems has accomplished notable fisheries or habitat conservation activities.

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2016 Chapter Awards, continued from page 4

The 2016 award recipient was Jim Wesson, former head of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's, or VMRC, Conservation and Replenishment Department. In January, Wesson retired after 25 years of service. When presenting him with a service plaque, the VMRC wrote, "Dr. Jim Wesson has been the architect of the recent years' success in oyster restoration. Over the past decade, the oyster harvest has grown from 24,000 bushels in 2004 to 619,000 bushels last year."

At the start of his tenure, several decades of disease pressure had left the resource depleted, and annual oyster harvests had fallen to less than 20,000 bushels. Wesson lead seminal



Photo credit: Cheryl Teagle

Mirabilio presents Dr. James A. Wesson with the 2016 Conservation Award.

programs to reverse these trends, initiating new efforts in restoration, assessment, and management.

From the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s, Wesson oversaw the building of approximately 100, 1-2-acre reefs throughout the western bay tributaries and seaside embayments. From the mid-2000s on, he directed establishment of two-dimensional (subtidal) sanctuary reefs; these currently cover nearly 800 acres of public oyster bottom and act as a refuge for disease-resistant oysters and provide a reference point for comparison to the harvested areas.

Wesson played a leading role in establishing the protocol to conduct an annual assessment of the oyster population in the Virginia bay. This eventually led VMRC to enact new management strategies including rotational harvest, wherein reefs lie fallow essentially serving as a sanctuary for a period, that allows new recruits to grow to market size. Under current management, the harvest increased and currently stands at levels not seen since the mid-1980s.

In 1996, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation named Wesson Conservationist of the Year. He was chosen for that award not just for his conservation efforts, which he self-defines as "wise use," but because of his work with school and community groups. For a time, Wesson was director of the foundation's York River chapter, rarely turning down an offer to speak. Quoting the foundation's chairman then, Thomas Stoner, "He not only educates decision-makers but also strives to educate students and teachers in an



Photo credit: Cheryl Teagle

Outgoing American Fisheries Society Tidewater Chapter president, Rob Aguilar, "passes the toadfish" to Sally Roman, thereby inducting her as the 2017 president of the chapter.

unbiased, scientifically grounded manner."

In other awards business, outgoing Tidewater Chapter President Rob Aguilar, a biologist with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, inducted Sally Roman, fisheries specialist with VIMS Marine Advisory Services, as the 2017 president of the Chapter. The ceremony included the traditional "passing of the toadfish."

Then as her first act, President Roman presented Past-President Aguilar with the "gavel award" for his leadership of the chapter in 2016, and for his assistance to her in arranging the 2017 annual meeting.

Please help the Awards and Scholarship Committee by nominating deserving individuals for these awards. Send nominations via email, complete with brief description of why you think they deserve the award, by **Dec. 1, 2017** to Sara Mirabilio, chairman, at saram@csi.northcarolina.edu.

Goldsmith Awarded Setzler-Hamilton Scholarship | Sara Mirabilio

The Eileen Setzler-Hamilton Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a graduate student currently enrolled in a fisheries science or closely related curriculum who has displayed a commitment to excellence in research, teaching, professional undertakings, public education, and community service. This award was created in 2003 to remember Dr. Eileen Setzler-Hamilton, a long-time member of the American Fisheries Society and fourth president (1989) of the Tidewater Chapter. This award really is about a “coastal scientist enthusiast” who passionately engages with other students and the public out of the beauty they feel privileged to witness each day in the field. That, was Eileen.

Recipients receive a certificate and \$500 scholarship. The 2017 “Eileen Award” was presented to William Goldsmith during the business meeting held the afternoon of March 10, 2017 at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach, Va.

Goldsmith is a doctoral candidate in the Marine Sciences Graduate Program at the College of William & Mary’s School of Marine Science at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, or VIMS. Before enrolling at VIMS, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in History, with a secondary field in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, from Harvard University.



Photo credit: Cheryl Teagle

Awards and Scholarship Committee chair, Sara Mirabilio, presents William M. Goldsmith with the 2017 Eileen Setzler-Hamilton Memorial Scholarship at the American Fisheries Society Tidewater Chapter business meeting held on March 10, 2017 at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

While at VIMS under the guidance of co-advisors Drs. John Graves and Andrew Scheld, Goldsmith has worked to combine biotelemetry with econometrics to quantify the biological impacts and human dimensions of the recreational fishery for Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) along the U.S. East Coast. This research has been funded, in part, by a NOAA Fisheries-National Sea Grant College Program Joint Fellowship in Marine Resource Economics.

Goldsmith has presented his research at numerous meetings, and in 2016, published some of his findings in the peer-review journal *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. Goldsmith’s contributions in research are matched by his ability to communicate effectively to both scientific and general audiences. Since 2004, he has written over 50 articles for popular commercial and recreational fishing magazines, putting in more “layman” terms topics relating to fisheries science and management. But, most notable about Goldsmith’s qualifications is his leadership and community service endeavors.

Goldsmith is an integral part of his campus community. He co-chaired the Graduate Student Association Professional Development Committee for two years and serves as the VIMS representative to the William & Mary Graduate Student Council.

And relating to the Tidewater Chapter, Goldsmith served on the Executive Committee as our Virginia At-Large member from 2014-2017, and was of immense help in putting together the 2017 annual meeting. As one of his references put it, “He does a lot, and he does it all well.”

Applications for this coming year must be submitted via email by **Dec. 1, 2017**. More information and application forms will be made available in early October.

Meet President-Elect Paul Rudershausen | Sara Mirabilio

Paul Rudershausen is a North Carolina State University Department of Applied Ecology research associate in the lab of Dr. Jeff Buckel at the Center for Marine Science and Technology (CMAST) in Morehead City, North Carolina. Paul



Photo credit: Paul Rudershausen

Paul Rudershausen, the American Fisheries Society Tidewater Chapter president-elect, and his German shepherd "Quelly" on top of Mount Harvard, Colorado.

has worked at CMAST for 15 years. During that time, he has actively engaged in a variety of research topics, ranging from salt marsh, to commercial gear selectivity, and still further, rates of discard mortality in a variety of demersal and pelagic species. Paul's academic training includes bachelors and masters degrees from the University of Maine and College of William and Mary, respectively. He recently completed his doctoral degree from North Carolina State University.

Paul has extended results of his pure and applied fisheries research to a variety of professional audiences over the years. He has published two dozen papers together with Buckel, and presented 50 talks to a number of organizations and fisheries meetings. Still further, Paul is involved in the CMAST summer intern program and has mentored over a dozen undergraduates studying a variety of estuarine and oceanic fisheries topics.

Also important to Paul is community outreach and volunteer service. Since 2006, he has



Photo credit: Jeff Buckel

Paul releasing a rehabilitated sea turtle in Onslow Bay, North Carolina.

volunteered at the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter and undertook two long-distance bike trips to benefit the shelter. On July 18th, Paul embarked on yet another ride—a roughly 6,000-mile, solo bike ride across North America to raise funds for metastatic cancer research at the Duke Cancer Institute in honor of his mother, who lost her life to lung cancer only five months after being diagnosed. You can find out about his progress and, most importantly, make a donation by visiting www.riding4research.org.

North Carolina State Update | Jacob Boyd



The N.C. Division of Marine

Fisheries (NCDMF) obtains statistics on recreational and commercial harvest of finfish, shellfish and crustaceans. Recreational statistics are conducted under the Coastal Angling Program, while commercial

statistics are captured through the Trip Ticket Program (TTP). The NCDMF estimates recreational fishing harvests through broad-based intercept surveys, where port agents talk to fishermen on the

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North Carolina State Update, continued from page 7

beach, piers, boat ramps and through mail surveys to license holders. Harvest—and thereby landings—can fluctuate from year-to-year based on many factors, including environmental conditions and fishing effort.

Recreational Statistics for 2016

For coastal recreational fishermen, 2016 brought fewer fish than 2015. Recreational harvest decreased by 18 percent in 2016 when compared to 2015; recreational fishermen landed an estimated 8.5 million fish weighing in at 12.2 million pounds. This was, however, an increase of 2 percent by weight. Fishermen also released 1.5 percent additional fish and took 16.2 percent more fishing trips in 2016 versus 2015. The 2016 top five recreationally harvested species, by pounds, were dolphin (*Coryphaena hippurus*) at 2.8 million pounds; yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) at 2.3 million pounds; bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) at 862,558 pounds; and spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) at 688,682 pounds; and wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*) at 640,807 pounds. The reason for the decreased harvest of dolphin (39.4%) in 2016 may be as a result of the greater availability of yellowfin tuna and other offshore species, such as king mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*), wahoo and blackfin tuna (*Thunnus atlanticus*). Yellowfin tuna harvest increased 145 percent from 2015. Also, the number of cobia

(*Rachycentron canadum*) landed in 2016 fell by 42.5 percent 9,288 fish (293,544 pounds). A major uptick for recreational landings was observed for spotted seatrout, with an estimated harvest for 2016 342 percent over 2015. It should be noted that 2015 marked the lowest recreational spotted seatrout landings on record. Rounding out the top 5, bluefish harvests increased by 18 percent, and wahoo harvests increased by 21 percent.

A new state record gag grouper (*Mycteroperca microlepis*) was certified by the NCDMF on May 20, 2017. The fisherman caught the 47-pound, 6-ounce fish while fishing approximately 30 miles off of Wilmington, North Carolina. The fish was 48 inches total length with a girth of 26 inches. The former state record for this species, which



Photo credit: N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries

Breece Gahl reeled in the 47-pound, 6-ounce fish May 20 while fishing in the Atlantic Ocean 30 miles off Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina.

was caught off Ocean Isle, was recorded in 2011 and weighed in at 46 pounds. The world record is 80 pounds, 6 ounces caught off Destin, Florida in 1993.

Commercial Statistics for 2016

Based on data collected through the NCDMF TTP, 60 million pounds of finfish and shellfish were landed in 2016, with an estimated dockside value of \$94 million dollars. This represents a 9.1 percent decrease in landings when compared to 2015 and a 1 percent decrease in value. However, the 2016 landings are higher than the five-year average of 59 million pounds and \$86 million dollars. The top five species landed, by pounds, were hard blue crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*) at 24.7 million pounds; shrimp (*Litopenaeus spp.*) at 13.2 million pounds; spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) at 2.3 million pounds; Atlantic croaker (*Micropogonias undulates*) at 2.1 million pounds, and summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) at 2.1 million pounds. Five species showing strong increases in landings over 2015 were tilefish (*Malacanthids*) at 146 percent; spotted seatrout at 97%; squid (*Teuthoidae*) at 79 percent; black drum (*Pogonias cromis*) at 76 percent; and shrimp at 45 percent.

The NCDMF License and Statistics Program publishes an annual report containing these summary statistics and more. Visit <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/marine-fisheries-catch-statistics> to access many fisheries statistics.

Virginia State Update | Willy Goldsmith



Climate Change: Winners Versus Losers

Climate change and variability poses a fundamental threat to marine and estuarine environments and associated fisheries. Predicting how individual species and whole communities will respond is critical to effectively managing marine resources, as well as to understanding the true economic impact to coastal communities. Making these predictions, however, has not been easy. Research to-date has shown that responses to individual stressors, such as hypoxia or temperature, tend to be highly species-specific and cannot readily be applied to other species.

Interestingly, because the nearshore environments in Chesapeake Bay and along the Delmarva Peninsula become warm, acidic and hypoxic during the summer months, they can act as a preview for what may occur on a broader scale in the future. Gail Schwieterman, a doctoral student at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), believes that studying the physiology of fish that are exposed to these conditions may be the key to separating the future “winners” - those species that can

adapt— from those that cannot—the “losers.”

Using intermittent flow respirometry to measure metabolic rates under different simulated environmental conditions, Schwieterman has been able to calculate species-specific tolerances. Her work on the clearnose skate (*Raja eglanteria*) has shown the fish to be resilient to acidification and hypoxia. Similarly, summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*), appear to have high tolerances. These findings can be compared to results on species from other environments, with different activity levels and life history parameters, to identify patterns. Such patterns can signify if life-

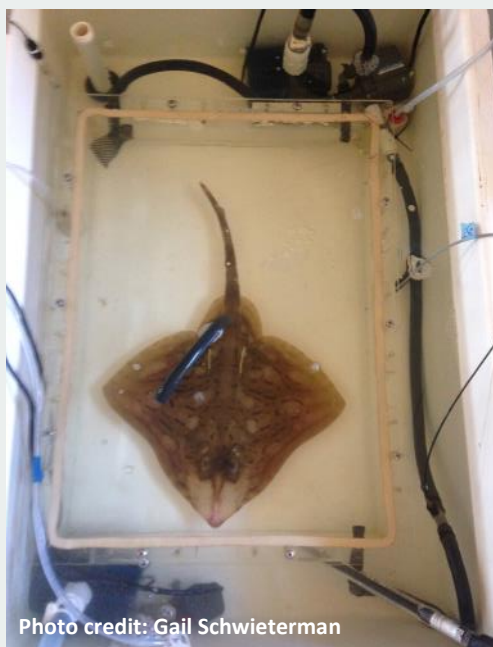


Photo credit: Gail Schwieterman

*In research underway at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, Va., intermittent flow respirometry suggests that the clearnose skate (*Raja eglanteria*) is resilient to both ocean acidification and hypoxic conditions.*

history, habitat or genetic relatedness are good predictors of high environmental tolerance, and therefore, indicative of a species' likelihood of being a winner moving forward.

Local Stingray Species Identity Revealed

The smooth butterfly ray (*Gymnura micrura*) is a common but poorly understood resident of coastal waters extending from the U.S. Mid-Atlantic to Brazil, as well as the Gulf of Mexico. The species is commonly encountered as bycatch in trawl fisheries, but until recently, data deficiencies precluded the assessment of population status.

Kristene Parsons, Ph.D., a recent graduate of VIMS, discovered early on in her doctoral research differences in life history traits among examined specimens, suggesting there may be multiple species. Through a network of collaborating agencies and institutions, genetic and morphometric data were obtained from hundreds of Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico specimens. These were compared to specimens collected from the smooth butterfly ray type locality in Suriname, South America. Multivariate analyses of morphometric data, examination of discrete morphological characters, and genetic analyses revealed a complex of three butterfly ray species in the western Atlantic,

Continued on next page ►

Virginia State Update, continued from page 9

including two new species in U.S. waters. These findings demonstrate that the range of each species—previously all considered to be one—is smaller than previously thought. Abundance and productivity of the new U.S. species require reassessment. Parsons deposited the holotype of the Atlantic *Gymnura sp. nov.* in the fish collection at the National Museum of Natural History.

New Virginia State Record Golden Tilefish Certified

On June 27, 2017, Virginia Beach angler Joshua Jung caught a 58-pound golden tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) while fishing aboard his father's boat, *Canyon Abyss*, just south of Norfolk Canyon. The fish struck a piece of squid fished on the bottom in 640 feet of water, and was bested by Jung after a 20-minute battle using a conventional rod-and-reel spooled with 40-pound braided line. The Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament certified the monster tile, which measured 47.5 inches total length and had a girth of 32.25 inches, as the new state record in July. The previous state record golden tilefish was a 56.5-pound fish caught by Aaron Sled in June 2008. The International Game Fish Association all-tackle record for the species is 65 pounds, 3 ounces, caught by Angelo Ruvio off the coast of New Jersey in 2012.

Golden tilefish are a demersal



Photo credit: V.A. Mar. Resources Commission

Virginia Beach angler Joshua Jung displays his new state record Golden Tilefish, which weighed in at 58 pounds.

species often found in the vicinity of submarine canyons at depths of 250-1000 feet. The species supports both recreational and commercial fisheries along the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council manages the species, and it is considered neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing.

2017 Blue Crab Winter Dredge Survey Results Promising

In April, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission released results of the 2017 blue crab winter dredge survey, which showed high overall abundance of the species

and a record level of spawning females. The survey, which samples blue crabs at 1,500 sites throughout Chesapeake Bay, estimated the population of spawning female crabs to be 254 million, a 31 percent increase from 2016 and well above the recommended target of 215 million crabs. The estimate is the highest in the 28-year history of the winter dredge survey, and provides reason for cautious optimism regarding the Chesapeake Bay blue crabs stock.

However, the numbers of juvenile and adult male crabs decreased. Juvenile crab abundance decreased by 54 percent, from 271 million to 125 million—the fourth-lowest on record. The abundance of adult male crabs decreased, from 91 million to 76 million—a 16 percent decline. The drop in juveniles for 2017 is not surprising or unprecedented given high inter-annual recruitment variability of blue crabs. Nonetheless, the results indicate that fishery managers should remain vigilant.

Virginia, Maryland and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission enacted in 2014 a 10 percent bay-wide harvest reduction to allow for rebuilding of the female spawning population. New recruits are critical to this rebound, and managers have focused on juvenile abundance, as well. Though 2017 data indicate an 18 percent decline in the blue crab population when compared to 2016, from 2014 to 2016, bay-wide commercial crab harvest increased by 71 percent, while overall blue crab abundance rose by 53 percent.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore Student Subunit | *Noelle Olsen*

Spring semester was quite busy for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) student subunit! As the recipient of the inaugural Tidewater Chapter Student Subunit Enrichment Grant, we were able to organize and host a symposium at the end of April—Delmarva's Aquatic Resources and Ecosystems—and we are proud to call it a success. We had over 60 attendees during the morning session and close to 40 who participated the entire day. Several notable guests were able to join us for the morning session: Chuck Connor, the Baltimore Regional Director for U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD); Audrey Trotman from the NOAA Educational Partnership Program; and Brenda Davis, former M.D. Department of Natural Resources (MDDNR) blue crab fishery manager. A morning keynote was delivered by Tom Horton, who is a professor at Salisbury University and who is an author of several books and films about Chesapeake Bay. I then moderated a panel discussion on the past, present and future of Delmarva's resources. Panelists included Wes Townsend, a commercial fisherman from Indian River, Delaware; Roman Jesien, a biologist with the Maryland Coastal Bays Program; and Angel Willey, a program manager and biologist with MDDNR. The panel discussion was a big hit with subunit members and symposium attendees. The afternoon offered 13 student presentations – ten poster and three oral paper— as well as outreach booths from local

nonprofits. The UMES subunit is hopes to hold a symposium next year, so stay tuned for more details!

Summertime has been jam-packed with fieldwork, mentoring and outreach. At any given time, you could find our members either diving for sea whips off the coast of Ocean City, Maryland; hook-and-line fishing for black sea bass; setting drifters in Maryland's coastal bays; or, going out with commercial lobstermen. In addition to our own fieldwork, this summer André Price, Katie Fitzenreiter, and I each hosted NSF Research Experience for Undergraduate students. The students hailed from Hampton University, University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Rhode Island. Wilmelie Cruz-Marrero, Katie

Fitzenreiter, and Rebecca Wenker had an opportunity to teach high school students about Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) using a small ROV built by Dr. Brad Stevens at UMES. The subunit also participated in Princess Anne's Summer on Somerset series, teaching about blue crab life history and seafood fraud in Maryland crab cakes.

In close, we would like to congratulate subunit member Kristen Lycett on successfully defending her doctoral dissertation. Kristen has been a trailblazer at UMES, and we are excited that she is staying on the Eastern Shore as a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at Salisbury University.

Feel free to contact the UMES subunit at fisheriesumes@gmail.com.



Photo credit: Noelle Olsen

Katie Fitzenreiter (left) and Rebecca Wenker (right), both of the AFS Tidewater University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) student subunit, man a blue-crab-themed outreach booth at the Summer on Somerset event in downtown Princess Anne, Maryland.

AFS Tidewater Chapter Executive Committee

President: Sally Roman

President-Elect/ Program Committee

Chair: Paul Rudershausen

Past President/ Nominating Committee

Chair: Rob Aguilar

Treasurer: Stephanie McNerny

Secretary: Jessica Thompson

At-Large Members

North Carolina: Jacob Boyd

Virginia: Gail Schwieterman

Maryland: Bob Murphy

Student Subunit Presidents

Duke: Chrissy Hayes

ECU: Allie Stewart & Jordan Smith

UMCES CBL: Reed Brodrik

UMES: Noelle Olsen

UNCW: inactive

Awards & Scholarship Committee Chair:

Sara Mirabilio

Webmaster: Chad Smith

Newsletter Editor: Laura Lee

2018 Tidewater Chapter Meeting Heads to Morehead City, N.C.!

The AFS Tidewater Chapter Executive Committee is pleased to announce the 32nd Annual Meeting will take place Jan. 25 – 27, 2018 in the Morehead City/ Beaufort, North Carolina area. We are planning some exciting new options for student and professional presentations, along with a first-ever, topic-based panel discussion to kick things off Thursday afternoon. **Registration and lodging reservations will begin on Nov. 1, 2017.** More information soon will be posted to the chapter listserv and on the chapter website www.tidewater-afs.org.



CMAST, Morehead City:
Thursday Panel Discussion and Evening Poster Social

North Carolina Maritime Museum, Beaufort: Friday and Saturday Student and Professional Talks



Lodging at Bask Hotel, Morehead City

Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, Harker's Island: Friday Evening Awards Banquet



Get updates via the Chapter *LISTSERV*!



On June 9, 2017, the AFS Tidewater Chapter listserv officially became powered by Emaildodo (which is what the parent society now is using). Similar to the old listserv, if you are a member of the list you may post items of interest by simply putting the new listserv

address tidewater@afsmembers.org in the "To" line of your email. Settings are configured such that replies are sent only to the author of the email, not the entire membership. There does not seem to be a file size limit relating to information shared; this is different from the old listserv.

For the time being, our listserv manager is Scott Baker, and only he can add new members. Contact Scott at bakers@uncw.edu. However, once added, anyone can unsubscribe themselves from the listserv via at the bottom of each email sent through the listserv.