



From the Office of the Director, Jeff Regnart
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries

2014

DIRECTOR'S ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The division recognizes employees with two types of Director's Achievement Awards. The Meritorious Service Award is the highest award given by the division to an employee who has shown excellence in his or her work over an extended period of service to the division. Outstanding Service Awards are given to employees whose performance is clearly superior to that of others in similar positions or to employees who have made significant contributions to the division over the last year. Candidates are nominated by staff through their respective Regional Supervisors or Section Chiefs. I am pleased to announce that the following individuals have been selected to receive the Director's Achievement Awards for 2014.

David Gordon
Fishery Biologist III • Region I
Sitka



Ted Otis
Fishery Biologist III • Region II
Homer



Dr. Katie Howard
Fishery Biologist IV • Region III
Anchorage



Dan Wilson
Boat Officer III • Region IV
Kodiak



Sam Rabung
Fishery Biologist IV • Headquarters
Juneau



Gordie Woods
Fish and Wildlife Technician V • Region I
Yakutat





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Director's Achievement Award for OUTSTANDING SERVICE

David Gordon Fishery Biologist III • Region I • Sitka

David Gordon has worked for the Division of Commercial Fisheries since 1986 and has spent his entire career of nearly 29 years in Sitka. He started his career as a seasonal fisheries technician working on groundfish projects, and by 1995 had rounded out his experience by taking a lead role on observer programs, dive surveys, sablefish assessment surveys, data analysis, and development of a groundfish database. In 1995, he became the Sitka assistant area management biologist for salmon, herring, and miscellaneous shellfish fisheries. Dave made an immediate impact by working with dive fishermen to develop red sea urchin and geoduck fisheries, and his organizational and networking efforts at the regional level were also recognized. In 2005, Dave became the Sitka area management biologist and continued to bring an inclusive and regional approach to all aspects of his job. One of his greatest accomplishments is the management of the often controversial Sitka sac roe herring fishery, which goes through periods of high and low productivity. Dave has maintained a professional and respectful approach to all users of the herring resource which has led to a civil exchange of opposing viewpoints.

Dave balances the many responsibilities of this challenging position with an ease that comes from long experience combined with a calm and friendly demeanor. He is equally comfortable conducting aerial surveys, talking with fishermen, or conveying fishery information over a VHF radio. His command of fisheries, regulations, history, and issues extends to the entire region and his opinion is frequently sought by his counterparts. One of Dave's greatest joys is the camaraderie among commercial fisheries staff which he and his wife Leslie frequently promote with staff gatherings at their home. Dave is also an avid float plane pilot and has had many adventures flying in Southeast Alaska.

Throughout Dave's career, he has maintained a strong commitment to sustainable fisheries management and serving the people of Alaska. He has earned the respect of his peers, industry, and the public for his diligence in managing the salmon, herring, and shellfish fisheries of Southeast Alaska. In recognition of his outstanding service and commitment to sustainable management of salmon, herring, and shellfish fisheries in Southeast Alaska, the division is proud to recognize Dave with a Director's Achievement Award for Outstanding Service for 2014.





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Director's Achievement Award for OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Ted Otis Fishery Biologist III • Region II • Homer

Ted Otis serves as the finfish area research biologist for the Division of Commercial Fisheries in Homer, Alaska, where the majority of his career has focused on improving salmon and herring assessments in Lower Cook Inlet (LCI). A native of Rhode Island, Ted grew up on the east coast and enrolled at the University of New Hampshire where he earned his B.S. in Environmental Science in 1988 while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. As an undergraduate at the University of New Hampshire, Ted took an internship with the Student Conservation Association and made his first trek to Alaska. After graduation, he returned to Alaska to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) before leaving to pursue a M.S. in Fisheries Science at the University of Arizona. After finishing graduate school in 1994, Ted returned Alaska and worked for the FWS at the Kenai Fisheries Resource Office until 1996 when he accepted the position he currently holds with ADF&G.

Ted leads and provides oversight of the Division of Commercial Fisheries Pacific salmon and herring research programs in the LCI management area. During his tenure, Ted has received numerous outside grants and acted as principal investigator on collaborative research projects with private, state, federal, and academic partners. Ted has successfully developed self-contained video systems on Mikfik and Chenik lakes to accurately enumerate sockeye salmon escapements. He has also shared his wealth of



knowledge regarding the installation and maintenance of these systems with other fisheries biologists.

As the herring research biologist for LCI, Ted prepares the annual Kamishak Bay herring forecast which requires incorporating aerial, vessel, and age-sex-length data into to an age-structure-analysis model and evaluating a number of scenarios and schedules to determine the best model fit before selecting the final forecast. Currently, Ted serves as principal investigator on Alaska's Pacific herring stock identification project to evaluate methods to discriminate Pacific herring stocks along the northern Gulf of Alaska.

Throughout his career, Ted has shown his strength as a compassionate leader who is willing to offer his assistance with any task ranging from clearing snow in the parking lot, troubleshooting electronic components on a video weir, collecting genetic samples from salmon in remote streams, or reviewing a report to ensure it is scientifically sound. As summarized by a coworker, "Ted is a stand-up guy who is always willing to help and his actions speak to his leadership."

Ted's sense of duty and dedication to the job are a constant motivator to excellence to those around him. In recognition of his dedication, leadership, and overall excellence in conducting salmon and herring research projects in Lower Cook Inlet, the division is proud to award Ted a Director's Award for Outstanding Service for 2014.



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Director's Achievement Award for OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Dr. Katie Howard Fishery Biologist IV • Region III • Anchorage

Dr. Katie Howard began working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as the Yukon River summer season research biologist in 2009. She arrived from sunny Hawaii where she had been conducting postdoctoral research on parrot fish. Although some may question trading the sun and surf of Hawaii for the frozen tundra and boreal forest of the Yukon River, Dr. Howard has thrived in Alaska and the department gained an invaluable and highly accomplished research biologist in the process. In 2011, she was promoted to a Fishery Biologist IV research position which focuses on marine research, extended jurisdiction fisheries, and oversees the research program of the Arctic Area within the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) Region.

Dr. Howard has distinguished herself through dedication, hard work, and exceptional technical and biological expertise. Although a relative newcomer to the state and its fisheries resources, she is a remarkably quick study who thrives on absorbing and understanding the fisheries resources of the AYK Region and the public that relies on them. Working collaboratively with federal partners, she has been instrumental in developing and implementing groundbreaking research on juvenile Yukon River Chinook salmon in an effort to gain greater understanding of declines in Chinook populations throughout the region. She works closely



with the state's extended jurisdiction program and North Pacific Fishery Management Council staff to address concerns over Bering Sea salmon bycatch and to manage the extended jurisdiction Norton Sound red king crab fishery. She has effectively guided the research program within the Arctic Area, overseeing development and implementation of several new programs to improve fisheries management.

As anyone who has met her can attest, Dr. Howard has a friendly and easygoing personality that can be infectious. She is well liked and highly respected by her coworkers and the public, and serves as an effective supervisor and mentor to her staff. She works hard at maintaining good relations with the public and goes above and beyond to engage with stakeholders at every opportunity. Her capacity for gaining knowledge and understanding of the state's fisheries resources seems boundless and she is highly skilled at directing that energy towards more efficient and adaptive fisheries management.

Dr. Howard is an exceptional employee who continues to distinguish herself and the department through her accomplishments. In recognition of her dedication and commitment to excellence in fisheries research and management in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim region, the division is proud to award Katie a Director's Achievement Award for Outstanding Service for 2014.



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Director's Achievement Award for OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Dan Wilson Boat Officer III • Region IV • Kodiak

Dan Wilson joined the Westward Region Vessel Program in 1994 as a Boat Officer I assigned to the 91-foot R/V *Resolution*. He was promoted to a Vessel Tech II, then to Boat Officer III in charge of *Resolution* maintenance. Dan brought with him extensive commercial fishing experience which he used to quickly adapt and excel in his duties.

Dan became captain of the R/V *K-HI-C* in 2008. During his tenure on the R/V *K-HI-C* Dan independently upgraded the vessel in both form and function. His contributions include upgrading vessel electronics and survey equipment, upgrading functionality by adding a top house, and installing vessel upgrades such as an auxiliary generator and bow thruster.

The *K-HI-C* provides an excellent platform for vital management and research of fisheries throughout the region and Dan plays key roles in department programs. Dan works closely with Westward Region staff to manage commercial herring and salmon fisheries. Beginning in April, he assists biological staff with monitoring the Kodiak sac roe herring fishery, including biomass estimates and assessments, and on-the-ground fishery management. Dan has become very adept at surveying herring using side scanning and down sounding sonar.

As captain of the R/V *K-HI-C*, Dan participates in innovative research for shellfish and groundfish programs from the Kodiak Archipelago to the Shumagin and Semidi islands. He has been involved with hydroacoustic surveys



for rockfish, and assisted with acoustic tagging of rockfish—where staff tagged rockfish and moored receivers to record fish movements. Dan has also collected Tanner crab for ADF&G and National Marine Fisheries Service research projects. He was involved with planning and implementing Dungeness crab surveys and helped collect sediment and video samples for a Tanner crab habitat mapping project.

During the summer of 2014, Dan was asked to command the R/V *Resolution* as

the captain position was vacant. Without hesitation Dan agreed to take command as an acting Boat Officer IV. Due to his previous experience as engineer, he was familiar with mechanical systems on the *Resolution*, but had not previously been responsible for the summer fishing schedule which primarily includes trawl fishing from Kodiak to Dutch Harbor. Dan assumed command and completed all assigned duties on time. His professionalism, good nature, and communication with biological staff were commendable, and his willingness to pitch in during a time of need is highly valued by the Westward Region and Division.

The department's boat officer crew provides a strong foundation on which the department relies for sound research and management. Dan is admired by those he works with and is highly sought out for his skills in tackling complex vessel operations. In recognition of his dedication and outstanding service in support of the Westward Region's Vessel Program, the division is proud to award Dan a Director's Achievement Award for Outstanding Service for 2014.



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Director's Achievement Award for OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Sam Rabung Fishery Biologist IV • Headquarters • Juneau

After working a few years as a fish culturist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the early 1980s and a foray to Japan to work as a mariculture intern, Sam left state service and spent the next 20+ years working in management positions at salmon hatcheries in Southeast Alaska. Sam returned to the department on a full time basis in 2009 and has served as the coordinator for the private nonprofit (PNP) hatchery program since 2010.

The PNP hatchery operators were a bit cautious when Sam came onboard and started calling them to say hello and ask how things were going. Over time, Sam has garnered their trust which has helped build a healthy and cooperative working relationship. Hatchery operators don't hesitate to call Sam or any of his staff with questions, comments, or updates on their operations.

Although Sam embraces a "by the book" approach in terms of upholding regulatory and policy requirements that are in place to protect wild stocks, his passion is



making the program work for the fishermen that are financially supporting enhancement activities. Understanding that regulations and policies are the foundation of the decision-making process, Sam is equally passionate about cleaning up and fixing any inconsistencies or oversights in our policies and regulations.

Through his leadership, Sam's staff have embraced his goal of making the PNP hatchery program and permitting program successful. Sam also encourages participation in field research activities such as fish sampling, tagging, test fishing, egg takes, and other PNP-related operations. This helps staff gain hands-on experience in hatchery and management operations while getting to

know people.

In recognition of his dedication and outstanding service in support of Alaska's private nonprofit salmon hatchery program, the division is proud to recognize Sam with a Director's Achievement Award for Outstanding Service for 2014.



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Director's Achievement Award for **MERITORIOUS SERVICE**

Gordie Woods Fish and Wildlife Technician V • Region I • Yakutat

Gordie first moved to Alaska in 1974 and spent that summer working as a stream guard for Fish and Wildlife Protection at Pybus Bay. Deciding he enjoyed preserving the fish resources of Southeast Alaska, he continued his fisheries career and went to work for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish in April 1975. His supervisor at the time was former Board of Fisheries member Rupe Andrews who gave Gordie a fishing rod and sent him to Yakutat to "see what he could find." Living in Yakutat agreed with Gordie and his next job with Fish and Game was with the Division of Commercial Fisheries at the Situk River weir in the summer of 1976. For the next 22 years, he returned to Yakutat to work seasonally for the commercial fishing season. To fill out his time, he worked as a crew leader for Sport Fish on the Chinook coded wire tag projects during the spring and fall, on the Taku, Nahlin, Nakina, Stikine and Little Tahltan, Unuk and Chickamin rivers. Gordie also worked on the Chilkoot weir for coho salmon stock assessment in the fall of 1976 and spent part of two seasons in Haines for the Division of Wildlife Conservation, radio collaring moose and mountain goat and tracking them on skis and snowshoes in the winter. This experience gave him the (unexpected) opportunity to hitch a ride on a partially sedated moose, a wild ride through the willows.

When the department needed support in Wrangell to replace the long-time assistant area biologist, Gordie jumped at the opportunity. He took over the Wrangell office in Febru-



ary 1998 and spent three very productive years there. When asked to return to Yakutat to replace the area management biologist who moved on, Gordie again agreed to the change, returning to Yakutat in March 2001. These two transfers demonstrate, among other things, the variety of skills and high degree of professional ability Gordie brings to any job he is asked to do.

Gordie is an invaluable source of information for Yakutat Area fisheries, geology, flora, and fauna, enabling him to deal with any situation that may arise. One of the

most remarkable feats of Gordie's career is his management of the recent poor returns of Situk River Chinook salmon. Gordie formulated a plan to increase escapement requiring the efforts of all user groups, won the approval of diverse interests in the community, and, because of their respect for him, they complied with his plan. Since the plan's initiation, the Situk River Chinook salmon escapement goal has been achieved for two consecutive years. This is the epitome of a resource manager working with his community in the interest of sustainability.

Gordie has been an outstanding employee for the Department of Fish and Game for 29 years of service over a period of 41 years. His continued dedication to the job and to promoting sustained yield of the state's fisheries resources sets the highest standard for the department. In recognition of his many years of exceptional service, the division is proud to recognize him with the Director's Achievement Award for Meritorious Service for 2014.