



From the Office of the Director, John Hilsinger  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Commercial Fisheries

# 2009 Director's Achievement Awards for **OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

The Director's Achievement Award for Outstanding Service is 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 for an award are nominated by staff through their respective Regional Supervisors or Section Chiefs. The Director's Achievement Award for Meritorious Service is the highest award given by the division to an employee who has shown excellence in his or her work during the preceding year or years. I am pleased to announce that the following individuals have been selected to receive the Director's Achievement Awards for 2009.



Jeff Meucci  
Fish and Wildlife Technician V  
Region I • Petersburg



Steve "Slim" Morstad  
Fishery Biologist III  
Region II • King Salmon



Rob Stewart  
Fish and Wildlife Technician IV  
Region III • Anchorage



Becky Alt  
Administrative Officer II  
Headquarters • Juneau



Mark Witteveen  
Fishery Biologist III  
Region IV • Kodiak



Wayne Donaldson  
Fishery Biologist IV • Region IV • Kodiak  
**MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD**



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Jeff Meucci

Fish and Wildlife Technician V • Region I • Petersburg



Jeff Meucci has worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the Petersburg area office since 1998. He began his career with the department conducting salmon escapement surveys as a seasonal Fish and Wildlife Technician (FWT) II. In 2000, he was hired as a FWT III with the Region I Herring and

Dive Fishery Research Project, primarily to assist with stock assessment dive surveys for herring, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, and geoduck clams. Jeff was promoted to FWT IV in 2004, and then promoted to FWT V in 2008.

Over the years Jeff has developed into an invaluable asset to the dive program. He is known by many as “the glue that keeps the project together.” One of Jeff’s primary functions is to help keep the stock assessment dive surveys operating smoothly and safely on the region’s dive vessel, the R/V *Kestrel*. He has done a stellar job of this by managing divers, maintaining dive skiffs and dive equipment, and ensuring that everything is operating efficiently and safely. Jeff’s considerable knowledge and understanding of scuba diving, operating and maintaining boats, and working and living while at sea, has made him an important resource for all staff involved in the program. Jeff has often kept the show going with his ability to solve mechanical problems and by thinking ahead, earning him the trust and respect of his colleagues. A less official title of Jeff’s is “entertainment director” on the

R/V *Kestrel*. His ability to keep the atmosphere light and recognize when fellow shipmates need to unwind has been appreciated and important to the overall success of the dive project.

Jeff’s knowledge and skill as a scuba diver has made him one of the most highly qualified divers in the department. He attained the level of Divemaster in 2003, Emergency Medical Technician in 2007, and Advanced Diver Medic in 2009. In 2009, Jeff became the division’s Region I Local Dive Safety Officer, and a member of the department’s Dive Safety Board. His training has served the project and department well, as he has taken a lead role in mentoring new divers and has helped to produce a safety-conscious, skilled team of scientific divers. His attention to safety while conducting dive operations is always foremost.

Jeff stands out in his reliability and commitment to the project and the department. He willingly and frequently sacrifices personal time to complete projects to stay on schedule for trips aboard the R/V *Kestrel*, and he does this with his usual great attitude.

Jeff loves to dive, and especially enjoys showing others the wonders of diving. His enthusiasm for his work is contagious, and spills over to his home community of Petersburg, where he volunteers in schools to help educate students about marine life and diving in Southeast Alaska.

During his nine years with the department, Jeff’s contributions to his project have been outstanding and the professionalism, integrity, and work ethic he brings to the department are deserving of the 2009 Director’s Achievement Award for Outstanding Service.



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# 2009 Director's Achievement Awards for **OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

Steve "Slim" Morstad  
Fishery Biologist III • Region II • King Salmon



Slim Morstad began his career with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Dillingham as a technician in 1984 after graduating from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks with a B.S. degree in Fisheries Management. He divided his time between Dillingham and Glenallen until 1988 when he returned to Bristol Bay as a Fishery Biologist I for the Togiak herring fishery on Summit Island and as crew leader for the Portage Creek sonar project. After two seasons in the Bay, Slim accepted the Assistant Area Management Biologist position for Prince William Sound and Copper River beginning in 1990. During this time Slim honed his fisheries and project management skills while also developing his unique style working with the public. In 1995, Slim was tapped to be the Copper River/Prince William Sound Area Management Biologist for herring and salmon gillnet fisheries and was able to put his skills to full use. Slim es-

tablished himself as a fixture in Cordova through his volunteer work and his presence on various fisheries working groups. He also managed the Copper River sockeye salmon fishery through two record harvests in 1996 and 1997.

Being a savvy student of public relations, Slim decided to leave Cordova while still a hero, accepting the Area Management Biologist position for the beleaguered Naknek-Kvichak District in Bristol Bay beginning in 1999. Slim had the dubious honor of managing one of Alaska's first stocks of concern—the Kvichak River sockeye salmon stock. Over the past decade, he masterfully navigated his way through the stock of concern designations (yield and management levels), development of action plans, and management of a highly restrictive fishery while maintaining excellent rapport with the public. Slim has gained the respect of his peers, fishermen and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries and is known for his frank approach to difficult issues. Due in some part to his efforts, the Kvichak River sockeye salmon stock was upgraded from a stock of management concern to a stock of yield concern at the December, 2009 Board of Fisheries meeting.

Slim is a very dedicated member of the Division of Commercial Fisheries and devotes countless hours to his fishery and his field station in King Salmon. He is electrician, boiler technician, carpenter, construction planner, network administrator, and seasoned expert fishery manager. It is a great privilege to work with staff of this caliber and it is with pleasure that I recognize his service with the 2009 Director's Achievement Award for Outstanding Service





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# 2009 Director's Achievement Awards for **OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

Rob Stewart

Fish and Wildlife Technician IV • Region III • Anchorage



Known informally as the “weir guru,” Rob Stewart is a valued resource in Alaska and beyond for fishery biologists seeking to enumerate migrating salmon and other fish species. His innovative work and outstanding documentation on resistance board weir fabrication and installation techniques provides a lasting legacy as a tool for sustainable salmon management.

Rob began his career with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1993 as a Fish and Wildlife Technician (FWT) II for Kuskokwim Bay salmon fisheries. He also helped operate a fixed weir on the Middle Fork Goodnews River, monitored herring fisheries in Kuskokwim Bay, and worked on special projects in the Gene Conservation Lab. In 1997, he was assigned to work with John Tobin of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service constructing a new resistance board weir for the Middle Fork Goodnews River—setting the direction of his career focus for the next 12 years.

Promoted to a FWT III in 1998, Rob continued his work the Kuskokwim Area herring fisheries and as crew leader at Goodnews River weir, but his demonstrated skill with resistance board weir design led to work with Kuskokwim Native Association designing and building weirs for the George and Tatlawiksuk rivers as a cooperative venture between the department and Kuskokwim Native Association. Rob conducted the site surveys, ordered materials and contract services, and coordinated with the Division of Sport Fish in Palmer to use their facilities for weir fabrication. In 1999, he developed weirs for Takotna River built in partnership with Takotna Tribal Council, and in 2000 he developed a weir for Kanektok River in partnership with Native Village of Kwinhagak. Rob's skills were being recognized more broadly and staff from the Yukon Area

tapped him to conduct site surveys and weir fabrication associated with Nulato River weir.

Rob's expertise in resistance board weir development led to being promoted to a FWT IV in 2002. Building on the work of John Tobin, Rob compiled his design innovations into a manual, *Resistance Board Weir Panel Construction* (<http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/pubs/kuskokwim/rir-3a02-21.pdf>). The manual quickly became a valued resource for biologists throughout Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia, New England, Russia, and elsewhere. Meanwhile, Rob continued to be requested throughout the Arctic-Yukon Kuskokwim Region for site surveys and consultation on weir project development.

Demand for his skills and expertise began to overwhelm his duties as crew leader at Goodnews River weir, and in 2004 Rob moved to the Kuskokwim Research program where he had greater latitude to address information and sight survey requests, while still providing technical oversight and support for the network of weirs operated in the Kuskokwim River. He developed a second manual, *Techniques for Installing a Resistance Board Weir* (<http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/pubs/kuskokwim/rir-3a03-26.pdf>), and informative posters that are displayed in the Anchorage office and used at various meetings around the state. Site surveys continued throughout the Kuskokwim Area, Norton Sound/Port Clarence Areas, and Prince William Sound, and Rob's meticulous site survey trip reports became invaluable for planning and proposal development.

Rob has been a tremendous resource for fishery biologists everywhere who need to enumerate migratory fishes. His manuals are a legacy that continue to bring accolades to him as well as to the department. His work has enabled development of data sets critical to a range of sustainable salmon management initiatives that rely on accurate escapement assessment. It is with great pleasure and gratitude that we recognize Rob Stewart's service with the division's 2009 Directors Achievement Award for Outstanding Service.



From the Office of the Director, John Hilsinger  
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# 2009 Director's Achievement Awards for **OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

Becky Alt

Administrative Officer II • Headquarters • Juneau



Many employees in the Division of Commercial Fisheries rely on so-called soft revenue sources for funding to pursue important activities. Whether seeking funding from the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a private nonprofit hatchery organization, an Alaska Native organization, a state or outside university—the list goes on—those same employees have come to rely on

Becky Alt in the Headquarters Office to ensure their pursuits come to fruition.

Ms. Alt manages the Special Projects component of the division's \$63 million dollar budget. Her area of responsibility is to track available fund source authority from six fund sources so she may advise the director if receipt authority exists, enabling the requester to continue their funding pursuit. Becky also manages all contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and Reimbursable Services Agreements from all twelve fund sources and from a multitude of agencies. This is no small task! Becky goes from noting the amount of authority the employee is requesting to finally having the signed contract come through and the budget put on line with codes assigned—and this is just the beginning. Through the life of a contract of any type there could be amendments, extensions, or cancellations, before it finally closes out. And a \$25,000 contract requires the same attention to detail as a \$2.5 million contract. Multiply this by more than 150 separate contracts and appropriations that are active at any one time and one will soon realize that this doesn't leave time for much else.

There isn't a day that goes by when Becky isn't meeting with one of the many project leaders or principal investigators who are responsible for ensuring project goals and objectives are met. She meets with them in person or over the phone to discuss budget balances, carry forward funding requests, contract extensions, and other important functions that will enable them to get the job done. Becky has daily contact with each region's administrative staff, including the accounting technicians and administrative officers. She also visits key staff in the Division of Administrative Services to keep things moving. Becky also works closely with the program coordinator and grants administrators in the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund program; the division has dozens of approved projects through that program as well. Becky supervises an Accounting Technician II to assist her in managing this section, and they both get support from the Accounting Clerk.

Becky began her career with the state at the Department of Corrections in 1995, working as an Administrative Clerk, Accounting Clerk, and Secretary. In 2000, Becky transferred to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Administrative Services, as an Administrative Assistant. After a brief lateral transfer to the Division of Sport Fish, she took a promotion to Administrative Manager I at Health and Social Services. A year later, Becky transferred back to Fish and Game as an Administrative Manager II with the Division of Commercial Fisheries. She has since been reclassified upward to Administrative Officer II. Becky's extensive experience with the state in a variety of jobs serves her well as the division's Administrative Officer II in headquarters. She doesn't hesitate to take on new assignments or plow through new directives or procedures, all the while remaining helpful to anyone who comes to her office, calls, or emails. For all of these reasons, Becky is richly deserving of a 2009 Director's Award for Outstanding Service.



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# 2009 Director's Achievement Awards for **OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

Mark Witteveen

Fishery Biologist III • Region IV • Kodiak



In April 2009, Mark Witteveen became acting Finfish Research Supervisor (Fishery Biologist IV) for Region IV, and has done an exemplary job fulfilling all the responsibilities of supervising the salmon and herring research program for the past seven months. During this period, Mark was responsible for fishery biologists and fish and wildlife technicians that direct and manage multiple research projects throughout Westward Region (Kodiak, Chignik, and Alaska Peninsula management areas). He also served as finfish regional editor for all regional publications, assisted staff with developing funding proposals, and was lead author of a report to the Board of Fisheries describing the analyses and results of the Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands Area (Area M) escapement goal review. Mark also assisted management staff with board meeting preparations, responded to numerous data analysis requests, and attended to budget development and other administrative duties associated with this position.

During his time of acting status, Mark continued to accomplish the duties of his concurrent Fishery Biologist III position. In this capacity, he supervises several salmon and herring research projects throughout the Westward Region including salmon escapement and catch-sampling in the Kodiak Management Area, juvenile sockeye salmon and limnology studies of Chignik Lake watershed and several sockeye salmon systems with the Alaska Peninsula Management Area, and hydroacoustic surveys of herring biomass in Kodiak Management Area. In addition to supervising projects executed by fishery biologists, Mark coordinates several short-term projects such as genetic sampling for the Western Alaska Salmon Stock Identification Project. In 2009, he coordinated a genetic baseline sampling project in which he and his crew collected samples from dozens of chum salmon systems in remote areas of the Chignik and Alaska Peninsula Management Areas.

During his time of acting status, Mark continued to accomplish the duties of his concurrent Fishery Biologist III position. In this capacity, he supervises several salmon and herring research projects throughout the Westward Region including salmon escapement and catch-sampling in the Kodiak Management Area, juvenile sockeye salmon and limnology studies of Chignik Lake watershed and several sockeye salmon systems with the Alaska Peninsula Management Area, and hydroacoustic surveys of herring biomass in Kodiak Management Area. In addition to supervising projects executed by fishery biologists, Mark coordinates several short-term projects such as genetic sampling for the Western Alaska Salmon Stock Identification Project. In 2009, he coordinated a genetic baseline sampling project in which he and his crew collected samples from dozens of chum salmon systems in remote areas of the Chignik and Alaska Peninsula Management Areas.

Mark has been a Regional Finfish Research Biologist for eight years, but earlier in his career he also managed salmon and herring fisheries as the assistant manager and then the area manager for South Peninsula portion of the Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands Management Area. His experience in Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula and Chignik management areas has allowed him to develop a strong understanding of the region's fisheries management and research programs. Despite Mark's relative short time with the department (13 years), he has become one of the senior biologists in the Westward Region. Mark's experience and leadership skills have been essential to training new finfish management and research biologists and promote excellence in resource management within the region.

Mark works closely with finfish management staff on many complex issues, often providing insights and guidance that help managers make in season and post season management decisions. His focus and passion for the resource is obvious to all who work with Mark as well as to the fishermen in all the locales where he has worked. On any given day during the herring and salmon season, Mark is commonly involved in discussions with management staff or fishermen about stock status, harvests and other information about the fisheries.

Mark's focus on supervision and staff development has fostered close relationships with his subordinates; he has a loyal staff that works extremely well together as a team. Recently, Mark has been successful in mentoring and guiding a graduate student through the process of attaining funding, designing a project, earning a graduate degree, and preparing for a career in fisheries biology.

Mark is dedicated and capable biologist, and is respected by his coworkers, peers and the public. We are fortunate to have Mark working in the Westward Region and he is deserving of recognition for his contributions to the department and the State of Alaska through the division's 2009 Director's Achievement Award for Outstanding Service.





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# 2009 Director's Achievement Award for **MERITORIOUS SERVICE**

## Wayne Donaldson Fishery Biologist IV • Region IV • Kodiak MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD



Wayne Donaldson has worked for over 25 years for the Department of Fish and Game as a fishery management biologist. Currently Wayne supervises the shellfish and groundfish management program in Region IV (Westward). In this capacity, Wayne has fostered a model work environment within that section that includes consummate per-

formance and excellent staff morale. His understanding of regional resource conservation and utilization issues is exemplary and, along with his staff, he routinely guides the process necessary to produce an integrated program for management of the region's shellfish and groundfish resources.

Wayne's early career with the department began as an Assistant Area Shellfish Management Biologist for the Chignik and South Peninsula Management areas in Sand Point from 1983 to 1985. He subsequently worked in Cordova as the Area Shellfish Management Biologist from 1985 to 1991 and then from 1991 to 1995 as the Finfish Area Management Biologist, managing the commercial and subsistence herring and salmon fisheries of Prince William Sound and Copper River. Wayne departed Prince William Sound for Kodiak in 1995 when he was promoted to Regional Finfish Management Biologist. As Regional Biologist, he was responsible for directing and establishing policy for management of all salmon and herring commercial and subsistence fisheries in Westward Region. Wayne was appointed to his current position in 1999, which oversees shellfish and groundfish fisheries extending from Gulf of Alaska waters near Kodiak Island to the western Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea management areas. Supervision of these inordinately complex fisheries requires tremendous focus, organization, and coordination with area, regional, and headquarters staff. Wayne serves an integral role in the development of harvest strategies for the various

fisheries in state waters, working with the Board of Fisheries and ensuring conformance with federal management plans. He serves as a management advisor to the board during regulatory meetings, is a member of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Crab Plan Team, and participates in numerous other agency and stakeholder advisory meetings.

Wayne's strengths as a department employee include his diverse experience as a fisheries manager and supervisor; it is uncommon to have fulfilled the role of Regional Finfish Biologist and Regional Shellfish/Groundfish Biologist during a career, let alone performing in both capacities in such a noteworthy fashion. The depth and breadth of Wayne's knowledge of regional and statewide fisheries issues is likely unparalleled. His understanding of the diverse shellfish and groundfish issues in Westward Region is impressive to all who work with him. He has a strong, hands-on background in the biology of the managed stocks, complete familiarity with regulations governing management of the stocks, a clear understanding of the rationale of existing management measures, and extensive experience working in the state-federal arena in which management decisions are made.

Mr. Donaldson's coworkers as well as representatives of other agencies and the public that have worked closely with him for many years, respect and appreciate his level-headed, calm approach when dealing with issues ranging from the mundane to the complex and controversial. He uses a rational approach to evaluating difficult issues and preparing for possible future problems and has consistently shown the ability to make difficult decisions. His ostensibly effortless leadership style promotes admiration and loyalty among his subordinates and is appreciated and respected region-wide as well as within the division, the department, and with cooperating agencies. Wayne is the consummate professional and well deserving of recognition for his contributions to the department and the State of Alaska through the Director's 2009 Achievement Award for Meritorious Service.