



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence

Arlington, VA - The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Mr. Dan McKiernan, Dr. Larry Jacobson and Colonel Kyle Overturf with its Annual Awards of Excellence for their outstanding contributions to science and law enforcement along the Atlantic coast.

“The Atlantic coast has no shortage of skilled and dedicated fisheries policy, science and law enforcement professionals. However, Dan, Larry and Kyle represent the cream of the crop” said ASMFC Chair Jim Gilmore of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. “The Commission’s 2018 Annual Awards of Excellence reflect a diversity of accomplishments from management to science to law enforcement. It is an honor to provide the 2018 AAE to three exceptional individuals for their contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coast fisheries.”



From left: ASMFC Chair Jim Gilmore, AAE Recipients Dan McKiernan and Colonel Kyle Overturf, and ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 (phone) 703.842.0741 (fax) www.asmf.org

Management & Policy Contributions

Mr. Dan McKiernan, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Dan McKiernan has been a vital contributor to the Commission's management and policy programs for over three decades. Throughout his career, he has worked tirelessly to meet the needs of Massachusetts' fishermen while ensuring the health of the fisheries resources on which they depend. At the management board level, Mr. McKiernan approaches problem solving in a pragmatic, collaborative way. His recipe for success has been one part engagement and one part persuasion, bringing his colleagues together during board meetings or over a friendly meal to make his case for Massachusetts' position while finding effective solutions to difficult interstate fisheries management problems.

Mr. McKiernan's efforts on the development and adoption of Amendment 1 to the Tautog Fishery Management Plan illustrate his dedication to the collaborative process. Working closely with neighboring Rhode Island officials, he helped to develop uniform rules throughout the region. He was also a staunch advocate of a harvester tagging program to improve tracking of fish in commerce, thereby addressing a longstanding poaching problem in the fishery.

Having spent much of his career working on science and management of the lobster fishery, there are few who are more passionate and dedicated to this species. As Chair of the American Lobster Management Board, Mr. McKiernan skillfully led the Board through difficult deliberations regarding the findings of the 2015 benchmark assessment and the future management of the species. In response to the decline of the Southern New England stock, Mr. McKiernan was integral to right-sizing the industry in Lobster Conservation Management Areas 2 (inshore Southern New England) and 3 (offshore waters) to the abundance of the resource. This was accomplished through trap reductions over a six-year period.

Mr. McKiernan understands that on-the-water experience and talking to fishermen is a critical component of any fisheries manager job. That is why he has spent considerable time on fishing vessels acquiring the hands-on knowledge and perspective necessary to understand and respect fishermen's views. Throughout his career, Mr. McKiernan has been a proponent of working with the fishing industry to understand their unique perspective, get advice about management issues, and engage them in cooperative fisheries research.

Science, Technical & Advisory Contributions

Dr. Larry Jacobson, formerly with NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Dr. Larry Jacobson has greatly advanced the scientific understanding of American lobster biology through his contributions on the Commission's American Lobster Stock Assessment Subcommittee. In 2004, Dr. Jacobson was one of the lead model developers for the Lobster Model Technical Review. He played an important role in shifting away from the historical Delury stock assessment model to the current statistical length-based approach developed by Dr. Yong Chen. Dr. Jacobson's extensive knowledge in population dynamics and statistics, combined with his model programming skills, were invaluable during this transition and the continued development of Dr. Chen's assessment model.

During the 2015 lobster assessment, Dr. Jacobson took over the assessment responsibilities for the Gulf of Maine stock. Under his leadership, the assessment model was substantially improved to incorporate spatial dynamics within a stock and show changes in climate and stock productivity. These improvements allowed for accurate modeling of the Southern New England stock decline, as well as the rapid increase in the combined Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank stocks. The 2015 lobster assessment could not have been completed in a timely fashion without Larry's skill and commitment.

Dr. Jacobson's willingness to step into a leadership role when needed, his commitment to seeking out and using the best scientific methods available, and his dedication to sharing his knowledge of lobster biology and stock

dynamics with his colleagues are several reasons why American lobster is one of our best understood marine species.

Law Enforcement Contributions

Colonel Kyle Overturf, Connecticut Environmental Police

Colonel Kyle Overturf exemplifies the lifelong commitment and spirit of public service that is common among his natural resource enforcement peers. Growing up hunting and fishing, Colonel Overturf learned the “game warden” lifestyle firsthand from his father, who served 25 years with Connecticut’s Environmental Police.

Colonel Overturf began his law enforcement career in 1986, serving as a Conservation Enforcement Officer in the Central Marine Sector for the State Environmental Police. Progressing through his career, Colonel Overturf was promoted to Sergeant, then to Eastern District Supervisor in Recreational Law Enforcement. He later went on to serve as Captain and Commander of the State’s Western and Marine Districts. In recognition of his leadership and professionalism, Colonel Overturf was promoted to Colonel in 2010 and continues to lead the Connecticut Environmental Conservation Police as Director.

That leadership and professionalism has been reflected in Colonel Overturf’s work throughout his career, where he has focused on the mentoring, instruction and professional development of fellow marine and conservation officers. Colonel Overturf has served as an instructor at the Connecticut Police Academy and currently serves as an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Connecticut, where he teaches Conservation Law Enforcement. He has been a leader in resource conservation at regional and national levels, serving in the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs, including as President of the Northeast Association of Chiefs. He supported the development of an enforcement group within the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and for many years has been a positive presence on the Commission’s Law Enforcement Committee. Colonel Overturf served as Law Enforcement Committee Chair from 2011-2013.

Reflecting his concern for professional development and training in the field of marine and conservation enforcement, Colonel Overturf has been a staunch advocate and supporter of a nationwide Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy, administered through the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs and with support from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. He serves on the Academy Steering Team and was a member of the first graduating class in 2014. He actively encourages and supports future leaders through this program, carrying on a tradition of care and passion for protecting all our natural resources that was bestowed on him by his father.

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