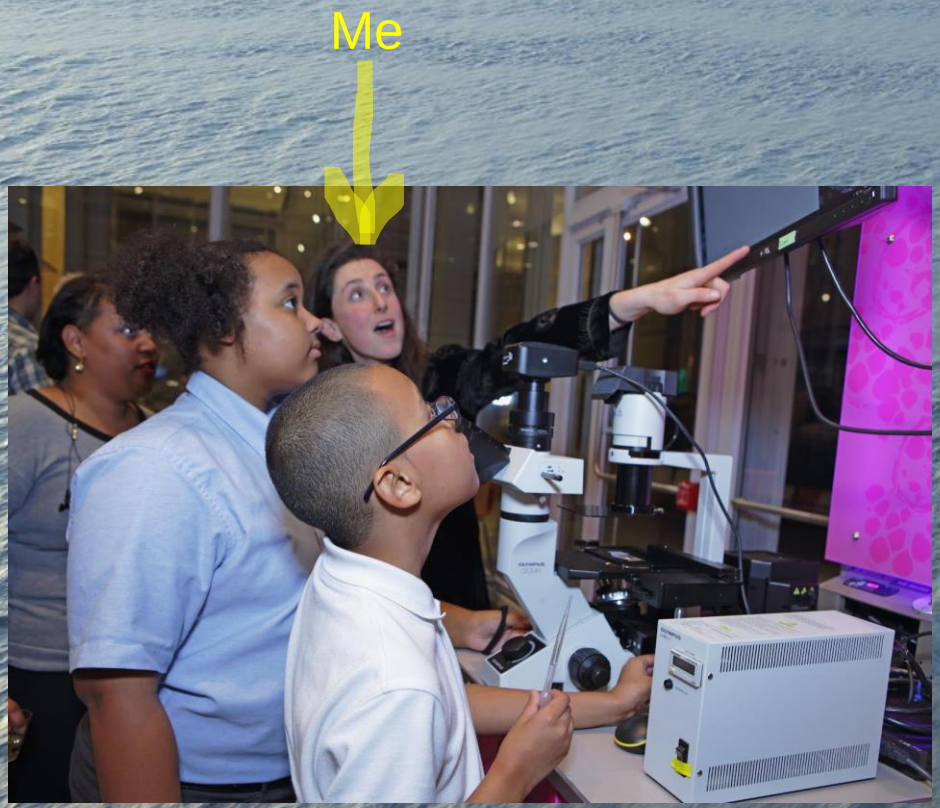
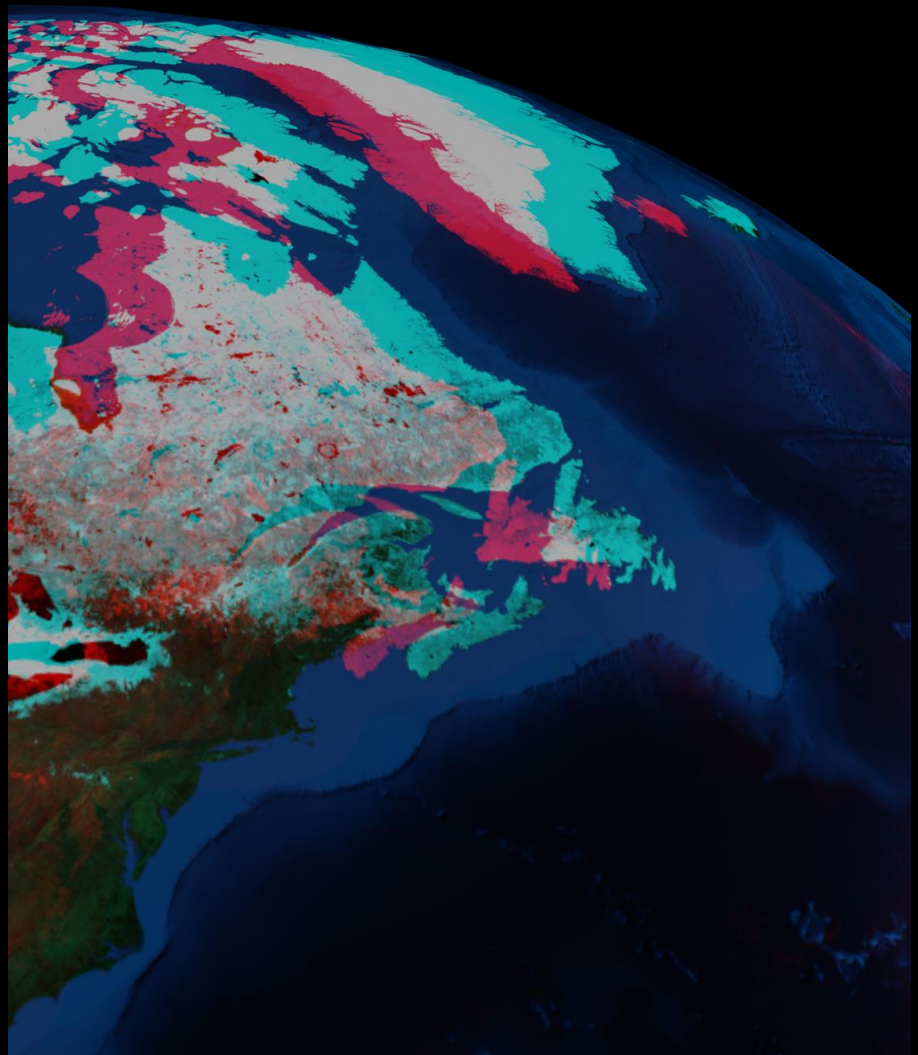
SNEC STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD RECIPIENTS 2021

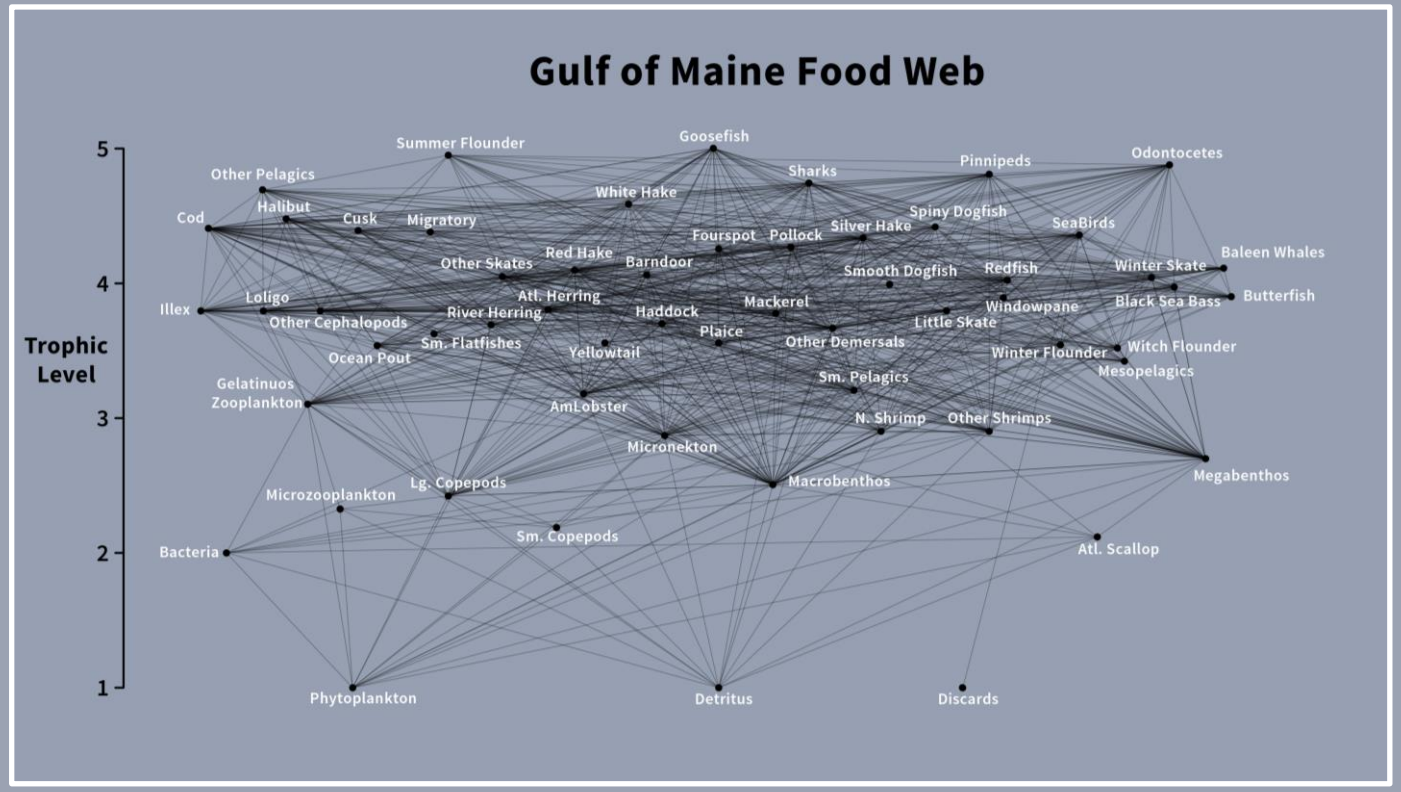


- My name is Sarah Weisberg and I am a PhD student at Stony Brook University.
- Before entering fisheries research, I spent a decade working full-time as co-founder of a science outreach non-profit BioBus, Inc.
- I got very used to working directly with colleagues and students – which I've missed dearly during COVID.
- Thanks to the SNEC award, I got to present my recent dissertation work online (see next slide) *and* in person!



Emergent Effects of Species Shifts in the Rapidly Warming Gulf of Maine

Sarah Weisberg
Sean M. Lucey
Michael G. Frisk
Janet A. Nye



I presented a mass-balanced model of the Gulf of Maine food web

My talk explored how the observed and anticipated species shifts in this system impact its overall efficiency and resilience

The talk was well-attended and I got great questions and feedback!

Additional ongoing projects of mine include isolating early life stages of fishes from plankton samples collected in the New York Bight.

I want to study how ongoing warming as well as marine heat waves are impacting phenology, as well as larval survival and dispersal.

One great thing about this work is that it can include high school students like Brianna Brookes and Mariah King (pictured below).

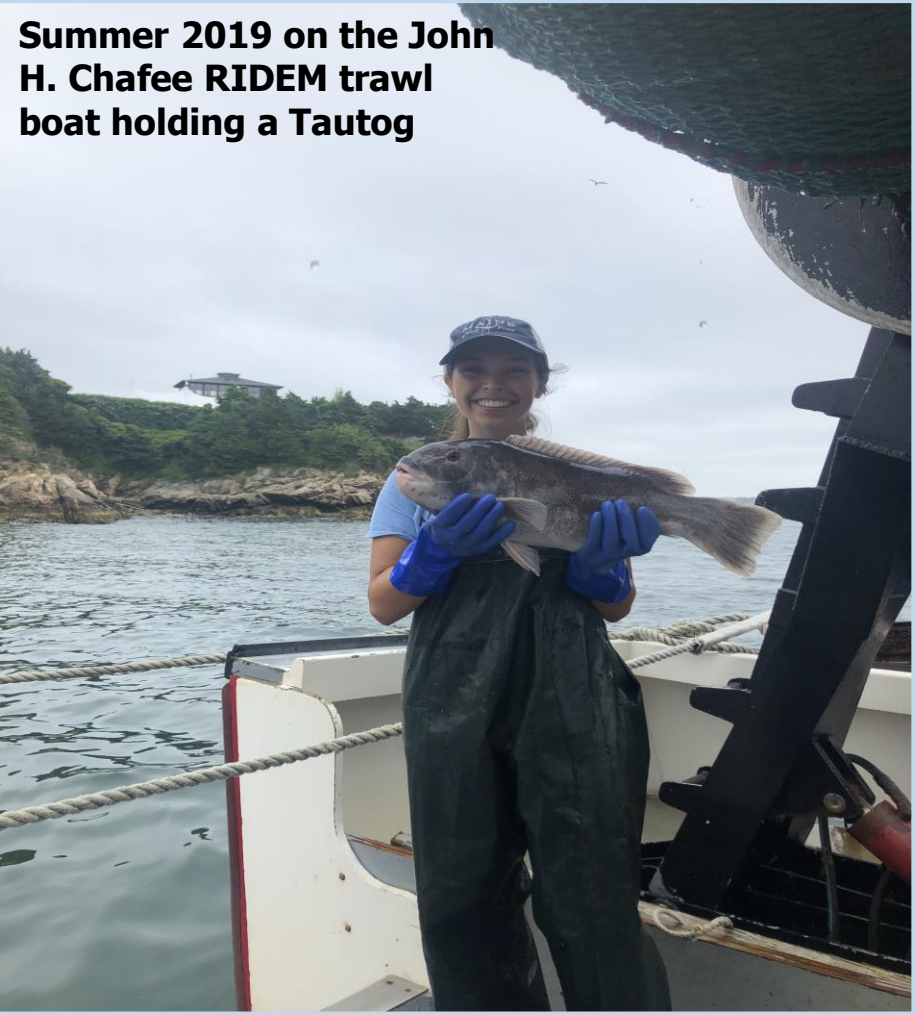
- Attending AFS was a pivotal moment in my fisheries career
- For first time, I felt I belonged in the fisheries community
- I connected with friends and colleagues, new and old; I know these connections will spawn ideas
- I presented my dissertation research for the first time
- I went to many talks relevant to my research – and was challenged to learn entirely new things
- The National Aquarium is amazing!

Upon reflection, it is obvious to me that attending AFS 2021 was a pivotal moment in my career as a fisheries scientist. I started my PhD in the fall of 2019, after having spent a decade as co-founder of BioBus, Inc. Most of my days during that time involved driving a mobile lab to a NYC public school and engaging 6 classes (i.e. 150 students, grades K-12) in hands-on, in-person, interactive learning. Transitioning to the more isolated PhD world was a bit of a system shock – and even more so when the PhD went remote. In this context, it was difficult to feel part of the fisheries community. Attending the in-person conference changed that. It also made me realize just how much I had missed the casual, seemingly random conversations that abound in that environment – the very ones that seem to catalyze the best collaborations. It made me appreciated the magic that can happen when I stumble into a talk on a topic I have never considered (e.g. the population structure of quahogs, or fisheries management practices in Iceland), and the 'a-ha' moments that can happen during a follow up chat with a speaker. For example, on the last day of the conference, I went to a talk by Helen Killeen on her work creating an art installation related to larval dispersal; we spoke afterwards, realized many shared interests and goals, and are discussing further collaboration. Attending AFS also gave me a welcoming and supportive environment in which to present my current dissertation work modeling the Gulf of Maine food web in the past, present and future. A huge thanks to SNEC for granting me the travel award – it allowed me not just to participate in AFS but to find my place in fisheries.

Summer 2021

Colby Peters
Roger Williams University
B.S. Marine Biology and Sustainability Minor
Class of 2022

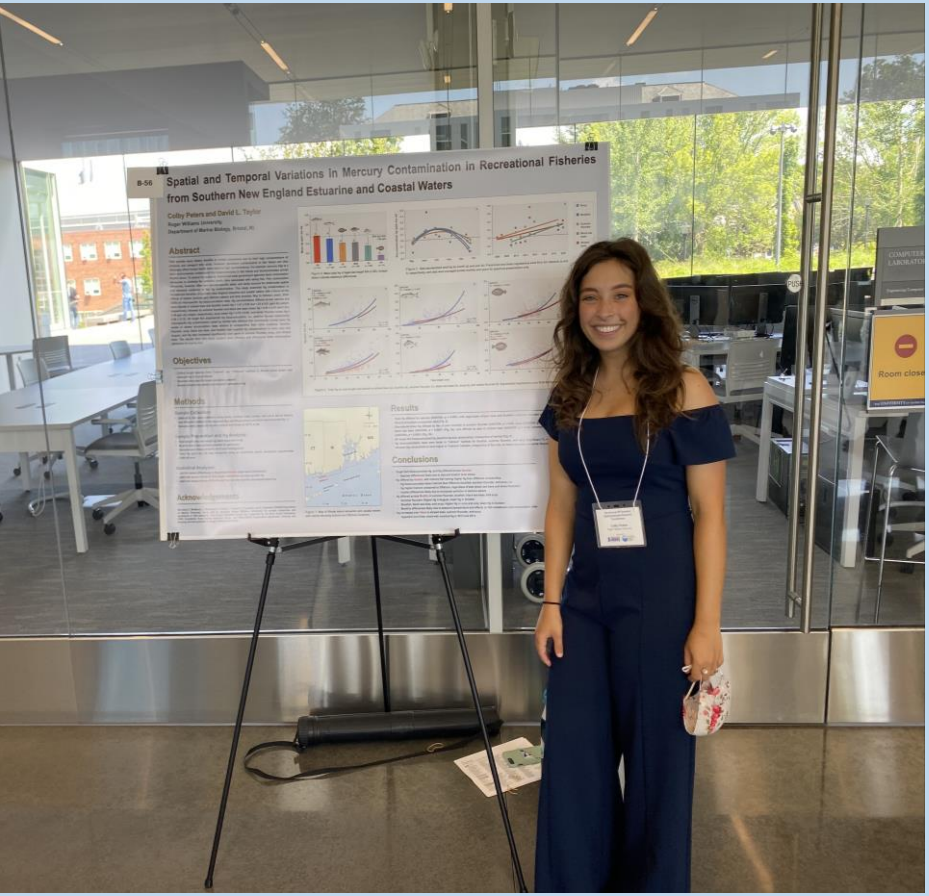
- From York, Maine
- I have been doing mercury (Hg) research since 2019 with Dr. David Taylor on Hg in the sediments and fish of Naragansett Bay



Summer 2019 on the John H. Chafee RIDEM trawl boat holding a Tautog

- Current research: "spacial and temporal variations in mercury contamination in recreational fisheries from southern New England estuarine and coastal waters"
  - Measuring Hg content in striped bass, summer flounder, winter flounder, scup, black sea bass, tautog, and bluefish
- Sponsored and funded by the RI-DEM. Collect samples on their monthly trawl and seine surveys over the summers
- Samples have been collected from 2006-present through rod and reel, seine, trawl, and traps

Summer 2021 at the annual RI SURF conference at URI



- I have been lucky enough to present my research at multiple conferences including
  - Poster at RI SURF Conference July 2019
  - Poster at NAC-SETAC April 2021
  - Oral at SNEC AFS June 2021
  - Poster at RI SURF Conference July 2021
  - Oral at AFS National Conference November 2021

Summer 2021 on the RWU Invincible Spirit holding Bluefish

Academic experience and achievements

- Deans list multiple semesters

Research achievements

- Received RI Saltwater Angler Foundation Scholarship May 2019
- Won best undergraduate poster award at NAC-SETAC in April 2021
- Awarded Mark Gould Memorial Scholarship and Research Award at RWU April 2021
- Won best student presenter award at SNEC AFS June 2021

- Currently studying abroad at BIOS in Bermuda (Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences)
- Taking marine biology elective courses on coral reefs, marine invertebrates, and marine biology and ocean research
- Became PADI open water dive certified in Fall 2018
- Became AAUS Research certified, PADI Rescue certified, and PADI Advanced Open Water certified at BIOS Fall 2021

The SNEC AFS travel award benefitted me by giving me the oportunity to…

- Share my research at a large national conference in my undergraduate career
- Conduct my second ever oral presentation
- Watch and contact other presentors
- See other current work in the field I am interested in
- Network with other professionals in the field

The SNEC AFS travel award allowed me to present my research at the annual AFS conference in Baltimore. This was the first time I have been able to present at a large national conference. This was a huge honor and step in my career, especially still as an undergraduate student. As well as this being my first national conference, it was my second time giving an oral presentation ever. Getting this experience so early on in my professional scientific career is extremely beneficial to me as it will only make me more confident as I move forward. Being able to watch other presentors and see the current work going on in the fields that I am interested in was extremely exciting. I truly enjoyed being able to network with other presentors and antendees, as well as being able to discuss each others work. At this conference, I was encouraged by the helpful advice I was given from other professionals in the field regarding graduate school and my other next steps. Without the SNEC AFS travel award I would not have been able to get the incredible experience presenting my work as well as all of the networking oportunities I had at the national AFS annual conference. Thank you to everyone at SNEC AFS for supporting my work and early scientific career. I look forward to the next meeting!

Sincerely,
Colby Peters