



Katrina Zarrella Smith

- Degree in Human Ecology with an Aquatic Sciences concentration.
- PhD Candidate in the Jordaan Fisheries and Aquatic Ecology lab at UMass Amherst.
- I've been a research assistant at UW Friday Harbor Laboratories, Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory, the New England Aquarium, and the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- Check out my latest papers on declining fecundity in SNE American lobsters and using acoustic telemetry to track green crabs.
- My dissertation research is a collaboration with MA Division of Marine Fisheries. We're using multiple approaches to describe current behavior of Gulf of Maine winter flounder.



Acoustic tagging of winter flounder

- We've tagged ~150 adults to track their movements into, out of, and within Boston Harbor and the NE coastline.
- We're combining these data with port sampling to characterize spawning behavior.





Beam trawl survey for winter flounder in Boston Harbor

- We're working to determine which habitat promotes juvenile survival.
- These young-of-the-year fish blend in well with their surroundings but we've obtained a lot of experience in finding them during our weekly surveys.
- We're taking DNA samples to determine kinship of these fish.



My top 5 reasons traveling to AFS is important, i.e. the travel award was essential in:

1. Meeting new people. It never fails that the person you are sitting next to has the most interesting story, work, or opinion. It's always worth it to strike up a conversation with an AFS member.
2. Reconnecting with old colleagues and friends. AFS is a meeting ground where everyone can come together and put day-to-day work aside to spend time with each other.
3. Professional development: workshops, talks, plenaries, continuing education courses – so much relevant content my scheduler overloaded.
4. The opportunity to chat with people who's work I'm reading, introduce my work, and talk about how our approaches are similar and how they are different.
5. Not being the only fish nerd in the room, everyone at AFS loves fish. Thank you to the Spokane Tribe for inviting us to their salmon release. It was the first time that I saw an adult salmon in a river, an experience I will never forget!



AFS Spokane was an amazing opportunity for me to debut my dissertation research to an important audience. I view professional conferences, specifically AFS, as an essential development tool in the research process from start to finish, and not just a time to communicate final results. The “Bringing new perspectives to marine and estuarine fisheries” symposium, where I gave my oral presentation, provided an excellent platform to share plans for my research, interesting preliminary results, and work on developing my scientific communication style. Through my talk and time at AFS, I was able to make valuable connections with professionals and peers – connections that will ultimately enhance my research products and broaden my career avenues. This award also enabled me to take advantage of the Continuing Education courses which taught me skills that I am now applying in my modeling work.

I am also a member of the Equal Opportunities Section and AFS was a great time for us all to come together, meet folks with similar experiences, and move forward with new energy to take on the challenges of bringing diversity, equity, and inclusion principles to our profession. Thank you all for this award and for supporting me as I work to achieve my goals.