Young Professional Spotlight

Young Professional members of AIFRB represent the next generation of leaders in fisheries science and management. Through *Briefs* and our social media platforms we will be highlighting our Young Professionals as a way to introduce them to the full membership and create opportunities for collaborations. AIFRB's Young Professional Representative, Connor Capizzano (connor.capizzano001@umb.edu), will be showcasing new Young Professionals throughout the year using a series of biographical interviews. This month's Young Professional Spotlight features recent Kasahara Award recipient **Dr. Abigail Lynch**, **Capital District** and **Research Biologist** at the **USGS National Climate Adaptation Science Center** in **Reston, VA**.

Dr. Abigail Lynch – Capital District

What is your current position, with what company/organization, and what is the focus of your research/work?

I am a Research Fish Biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey's National Climate Adaptation Science Center. Working primarily in inland systems, Abby's research examines the impacts of global change on fish at local, national, and global scales.

Where did you receive your education, and what helped pave your way to your current position?

I was awarded my Ph.D. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University on climate impacts to Great Lakes Lake Whitefish, M.S. in marine science on Atlantic Menhaden population genetics at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William & Mary, and B.S. in biology and B.A. in English literature from the University of Virginia. My Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Fisheries Program was integral in expanding my professional network and honing my research interests. Without these collective experiences, I have no doubt, I would not be in my current position.

How does your work apply to, or influence, fishery management (e.g., stock assessments, sportfishing, commercial regulations, habitat protection, etc.)?

My research portfolio is focused on providing science and science synthesis to assess and value inland fish and fisheries to inform adaptive management and sustainable use with global change.

What is your professional outlook for fisheries management? In other words, what will the future of fisheries management look like 10-20 years from now. What are we doing correctly, what needs to be improved (e.g., in research, policy, education)?

We are facing an increasing array of threats and challenges in fisheries, such as climate change and evolving use patterns, but I think there are a lot of exciting innovations with technology to improve our ability to inform adaptive management (e.g., machine learning). We are on the cusp of being able to do analyses (e.g., very quickly on super computers) that would be impractical to run only a few short years ago – this will revolutionize how we can conduct

assessments and incorporate scientific information into fisheries management.

What is the importance of young fishery professionals today and for the future of fishery management?

Young fisheries professionals today will be the scientific resources for fisheries management tomorrow. To ensure sustainable management of fisheries, retention of early career professionals fosters intergenerational continuity within organizations which is crucial to maintaining institutional memory particularly during periods of change and crisis.

What drew you to AIFRB, and what does AIFRB do for you and what can it do for other young professionals in this field?

I was drawn to AIFRB because I find professional networks invaluable to career enhancement as a research fish biologist. AIFRB is the premier American organization focused specifically on fisheries science and complementary to my broader professional network through the American Fisheries Society.

Please contact Abby (ajlynch@usgs.gov) to continue the conversation!