



# ONCORHYNCHUS

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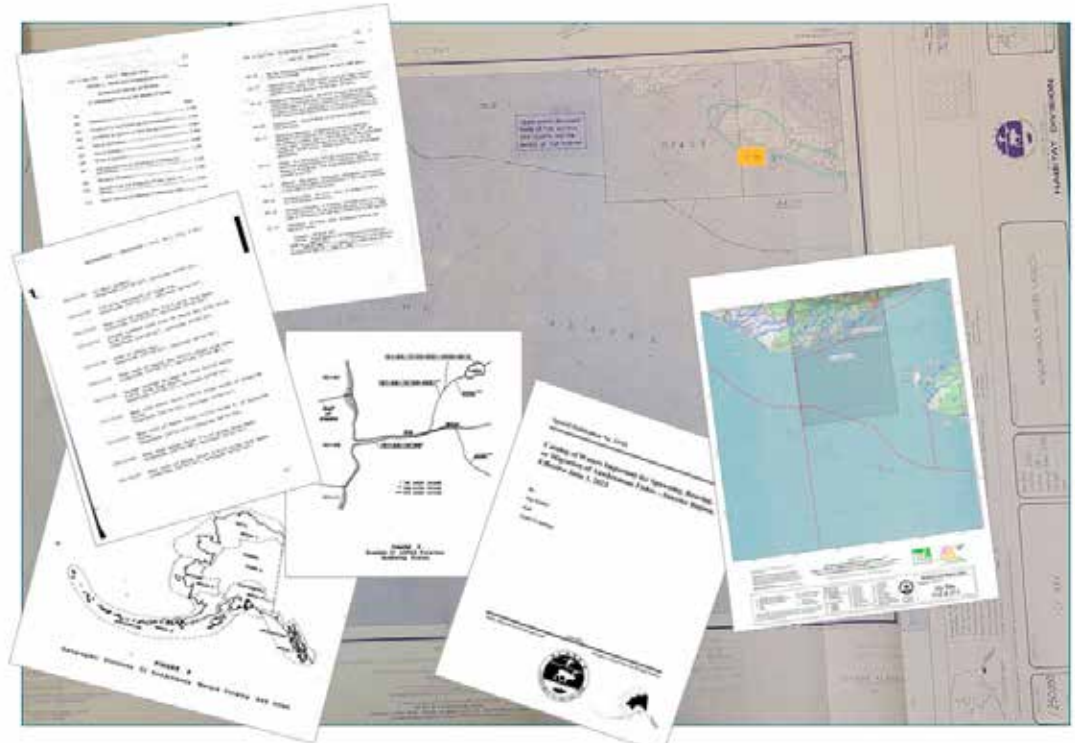
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and more ...



*Historical examples of AWC materials including underlying - 1:250k blue-line map from 1982 and (counterclockwise): 1963 State of Alaska Regulations excerpt; AWC stream list from 1968 Catalog; 1974 statistical area map (1974); 1982 water body numbering system; 2023 AWC Catalog cover; and 2023 AWC 1:63k map. Graphic from Joe Giefer, ADF&G.*

## Mapping Salmon Habitats – Alaska's Anadromous Waters Catalog

*Joe Giefer*

In Alaska, habitats supporting the spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish are protected under state, federal, and local jurisdictions. The Anadromous Fish Act (Alaska Statute [AS] 16.05.871) is the keystone statutory protection for freshwater habitats of anadromous fish in Alaska, requiring the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) to "specify the various rivers, lakes, and streams or parts of them" of the state that are important for spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish. The resulting product is known as the Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC) and its associated Atlas Maps. Under the Anadromous Fish Act, ADF&G Habitat Permits are required for activities in or affecting waterbodies specified in the AWC.

Only waterbodies listed in the AWC are afforded

certain protections. Adding new waterbodies to the AWC requires site specific, direct, and unambiguous observations of anadromous fish. After receiving AWC nominations, ADF&G conducts biological and public reviews of the information before nominations are accepted.

Legislation (now AS 16.05.871) passed in 1962 assigned to ADF&G the responsibility for specifying the rivers, lakes, and streams important for spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish. The first list of anadromous fish-bearing streams appeared in 1963 in Title 5 of state regulations and initially listed streams flowing into Bristol Bay.

The huge number of streams being identified led to the first "Catalog" in 1968. This and a subsequent 1975 Catalog named streams identified by ADF&G, but did not include any maps. *Continued on page 2*

## The President's Corner



*AFS Alaska Chapter President Erik Schoen*

Hello Alaska AFS Community,

As we get to the end of the year, many of us make charitable donations to organizations we believe in. If you are looking for a worthy cause to support, I encourage you to consider a donation to the Alaska Chapter's new Meacham Family Student Travel Fund. This endowment was established last year to prioritize the growth and professional development of student members of the Chapter by supporting student travel and networking opportunities. Following generous founding donations from the Meacham Family, contributions from other Chapter members, and investment growth, the fund is already nearly halfway to its initial goal of \$85,000. Once we reach this goal, the endowment will start to support undergraduate and graduate student travel to AK AFS meetings. If you have already donated, thank you. If you would like to donate,

please visit <https://tinyurl.com/akafs-student-travel> or text "STUDENTTRAVEL" to 44-321. The American Fisheries Society Alaska Chapter is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and all donations are fully tax deductible. Thank you for considering Alaska's fishery students in your charitable giving.

In my last column, I noted I had recently been reinstated as Chapter President for the rest of this term following former President Donnie Arthur's resignation, which left the Past President's role vacant. Now, I'm happy to report that Audra Brase has offered to serve as Past President on the Alaska Chapter Executive Committee for the next annual meeting cycle (March 2025-March 2026). Audra is the Regional Supervisor for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game - Habitat Division, based in Fairbanks. She previously served on the AK AFS Ex Com from 2008-2012 and chaired the 2010 Annual Meeting in Fairbanks. She has already started to attend our monthly meetings to get up to speed, and she will officially rejoin the Ex Com at our annual business meeting in March. We are delighted Audra will be bringing her energy, ideas, and experience back to the chapter leadership during the lead up to the 2026 Annual Meeting in Fairbanks. Thank you, Audra!

I wish you all an enjoyable and rejuvenating holiday season, and a happy New Year.

Erik Schoen

## Mapping Salmon Habitats, continued

In 1980, legislation directed ADF&G to also specify which portions of waterbodies supported spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fishes. This resulted in the creation of six regional volumes of the "Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing, or Migration of Anadromous Fishes" and six associated "An Atlas to the Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing, or Migration of Anadromous Fishes," referred to as the "Catalog" and "Atlas," respectively, or collectively as the "AWC." The Catalogs list waterbodies by assigned AWC number, name, and the latitude, longitude, and legal description of both the mouth

and uppermost point of documented anadromous fish distribution. The Atlases display the extent of waterbodies documented with anadromous fish presence and life stage information in map form. Original Atlas maps were called "blue-line maps" and were produced with blue lines on white paper, resembling an inverted blueprint, with some of these originals still in circulation today. These hard copy formats of regional Catalogs and Atlases were updated biennially until the early 2000's when the AWC mapping process began transitioning to the GIS digital data that are used today.

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Mapping Salmon Habitats, continued

Update Year	# of Noms processed	# of Maps revised	Total #		Total # of Rivers	Total # of Lakes	Total # of Polygons	# km waters added	Total km anadromous waters
			water bodies added	water bodies					
1998	-	-	-	-	13,887	1,322	-	-	-
2005	1,331	1,345	789	15,998	14,583	1,357	58		107,788
2006	359	1,010	397	16,395	15,040	1,469	60	3,396	111,184
2006a	403	867	94	16,489	15,105	1,471	60	281	111,465
2007	962	449	235	16,724	15,186	1,479	62	466	111,931
2008	759	432	183	16,905	15,341	1,504	60	1,654	113,585
2009	387	385	92	16,999	15,429	1,510	60	1,430	115,015
2010	1,583	684	367	17,366	15,756	1,548	62	2,075	117,090
2011	959	423	209	17,575	15,949	1,559	67	337	117,427
2012	641	349	322	17,897	16,238	1,590	69	622	118,049
2013	650	505	226	18,123	16,441	1,612	70	421	118,470
2014	517	294	192	18,315	16,611	1,634	70	309	118,779
2015	821	389	371	18,686	16,937	1,677	72	1,160	119,939
2016	819	407	398	19,090	17,264	1,753	73	1,772	121,711
2017	515	567	243	19,333	17,473	1,786	74	770	122,481
2018	532	427	323	19,656	17,719	1,856	81	964	123,445
2019	468	326	242	19,898	17,931	1,882	85	1,189	124,634
2020	490	242	204	20,103	18,115	1,988	86	307	124,941
2021	750	284	400	20,503	18,459	2,044	103	764	125,705
2022	546	248	343	20,846	18,772	2,074	115	530	126,235
2023	351	297	186	21,032	18,927	2,105	122	739	126,974

Annual updates to water bodies included in the AWC for the years since tracking these parameters started.

Graphic from Joe Giefer, ADF&G.

While hard copy media are still available, most users have transitioned to electronic formats. The AWC webpage has digital versions of hardcopy materials as well as the interactive [Anadromous Waters Catalog Online Mapper](#) with data to view and download. In 2024, the AWC listed 21,393 total waterbodies, comprised of 19,247 streams stretching 127,977 km, and 2,012 lakes across the state. The AWC spatial data representing water bodies are comprised of stream, lake, and polygon lines; polygons identify “a geographic area of numerous water bodies or wetland areas for which a boundary cannot be accurately mapped.” Each stream, lake, and polygon is accompanied by an AWC point data which provides species and rearing, spawning, or present extents for each water body.

Twenty different species are currently listed in the AWC. Character codes identify species (e.g., Coho Salmon = CO; Chinook Salmon = K) followed by sub-codes for the three life-stages. The most common life-stage category is the “present”

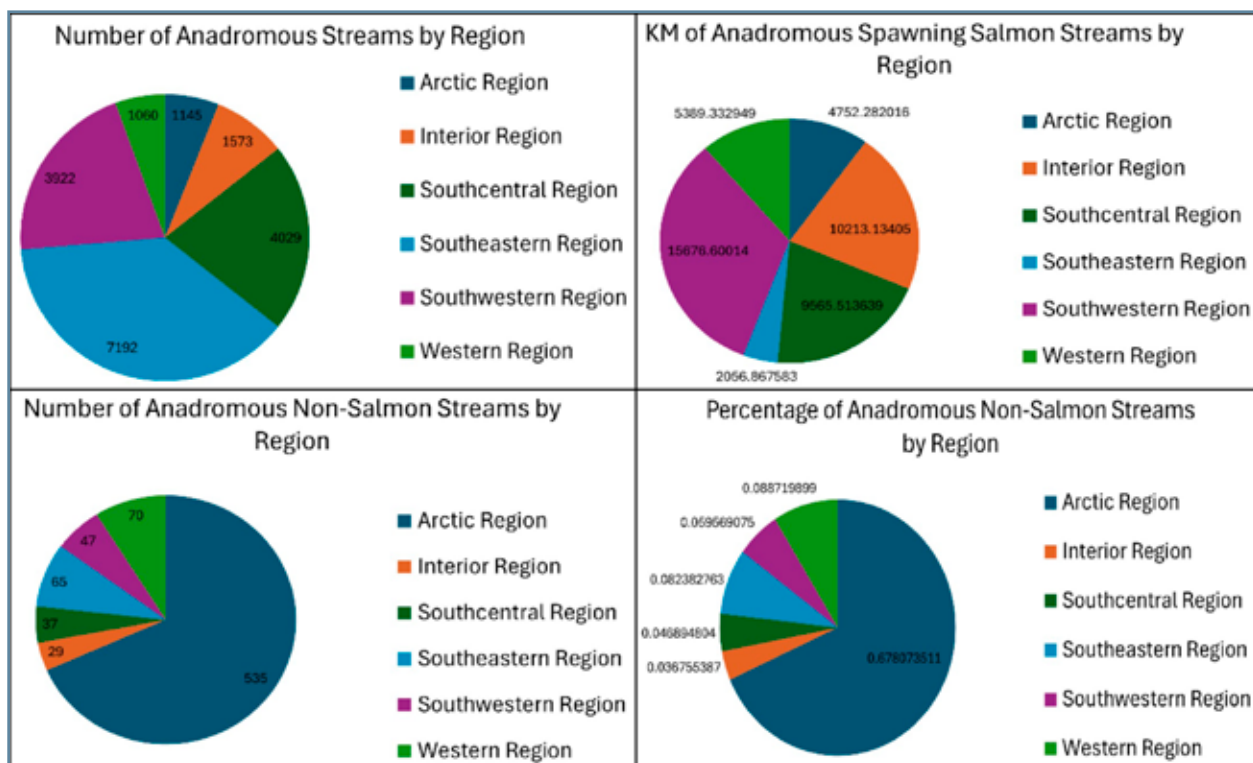
designation. This category is multi-purpose; it can represent general adult presence of a species observed at a location, and can be used to make a connection between other life-stage categories in the same water body.

The other life-stage categories, “rearing” and “spawning” are used when observation details in the nomination support inclusion in the AWC. For the five Pacific salmon species, identifying and documenting juveniles is relatively straightforward. Pictures of fish inside clear plastic fish viewers are requested with nominations to confirm identifications. For other species, juvenile identification can be more difficult and requires training and reference materials (e.g., [Mecklenburg et al. 2002](#)). Where juvenile fish are observed, the “rearing” category is attached at that point and extended 1,000 m upstream and downstream, or to the next confluence unless additional juveniles are observed further.

The “spawning” category is only used where observations clearly document adults spawning

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## Mapping Salmon Habitats, continued



Some examples of the types of statewide analyses available from the AWC. Graphic from Joe Giefer, ADF&G.

actively or imminently. This includes observing fish displaying paired behavior, making or guarding redds, spawning, or in the case of getting fish in hand, expressing milt or eggs. Seeing adult salmon in spawning colors is insufficient to document active spawning. Thus, providing field notes in the nomination form can be critical. A “spawning” identifier is attached at the observation point and extends downstream 500 m or to the next confluence unless additional spawning is seen within the downstream 500 m.

The ADF&G online “Fish Resource Monitor” (FRM) is the easiest way to look up and reference AWC information and other ADF&G programs (e.g., Fish Passage, Freshwater Fish Inventory, Invasive Northern Pike). The mapper allows users to build queries, but also download and import data into geospatial software.

Information in hard copy maps and the FRM should be considered summary data. Species information is grouped and saved in the same attribute field in the database; one cannot select and display individual species or life-stages. For example, when users select a stream-line for a waterbody in the FRM, the pop-up window

displays species and their life stages present at the waterbody’s mouth, not life-stages that may only be present upstream. To find those details in the online mapper, a user must find points along the streamline that bookend specific life-stages. Alternatively, to perform more robust data viewing by specific species and life-stages, users can download the “Species Event” feature geodatabase. This larger dataset contains individual stream-lines and stream-points for each anadromous species and life-stage statewide. Loading this data into ArcGIS or ArcPro, users can select and display information such as where juveniles of a given species have been specifically observed or how spawning locations compare between species.

The process to update the AWC begins with an online submission portal on the ADF&G website guiding observers through the basic information required in a nomination form, and provides options to attach supporting documents such as photos, spreadsheets, geospatial data, and field notes. Since tracking began in 2005, ADF&G has received an average of 686 nominations per year.

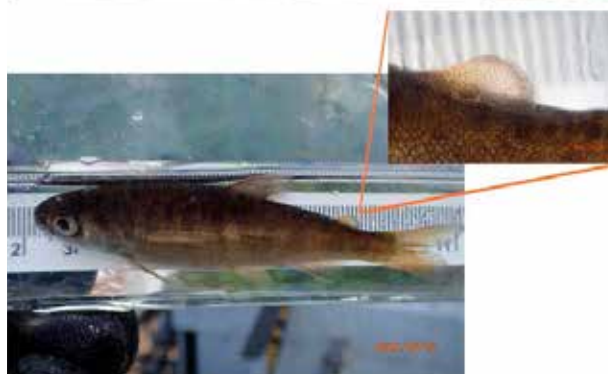
Updating the AWC requires internal biological  
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## Mapping Salmon Habitats, continued

review, editing geodatabases, legal and public reviews, followed by producing physical media before new editions are adopted into regulation and made publicly available. Nominations can be submitted at any time, but the time needed to conduct reviews, database updates, and publishing require, a cutoff date, currently October 10 annually, for submissions to be included in the next edition of the AWC, released the following June. Anyone can submit an AWC nomination (e.g., public, guides, agency staff, non-profits). Overall, a good AWC nomination includes three key aspects: (1) narrative describing the activity conducted and the fish and life-stage observed; (2) pictures that corroborate observations; and (3) location data collected with a GPS indicating where each observation occurred.

Two primary guidelines direct the nomination review. First, waterbodies will not be included in the AWC above the uppermost point a species and life-stage are observed. Second, ADF&G requires that nominations to update species information in the AWC are based on observing at least two fish of the same species and life-stage at the same location. Referred to as the “two-fish-in-hand” standard, although getting them in-hand is not a literal requirement. Adult fish can be viewed, photographed, and identified from above the water’s surface given the right conditions. While juvenile salmon can be identified in the water, capturing and photographing fish in their side-profile safely is preferred. Adult carcass observations will be considered if more than two carcasses of the same species are identifiable in photos.

The nomination form has fields for upper and lower waypoints, which should represent the full extent which the observer viewed, not the full extent of the waterbody. If an observer accessed a riverside at a single point and didn’t move up or down the river, there would only be one waypoint.



Examples of the types of pictures that will assist with confirming species identification during the biological and public review of an AWC nomination. Graphic from Joe Giefer, ADF&G.

Alternatively, if an observer is doing a river walk or float for a survey or other activity, waypoints for the upper and lower extent of the reach that was traveled should be listed if fish were documented during the travel. As different species or life-stage observations are made, discrete location waypoints are needed for each species and life-stage. If distinct waypoints are not included for each species and life stage, all species are extended to the lowest waypoint in the stream.

As new technologies and techniques emerge to survey fish populations and distributions, ADF&G aims to maintain the integrity of the existing AWC data while adapting to the latest methods. Two recent examples occurred when AWC staff developed guidelines for the use of drones and eDNA. Drones can provide similar information to surface or aerial observations or even radio-tagging telemetry data. Provided the species can be identified from imagery and location data is included, drone data can support AWC nominations.

Alternatively, eDNA may detect species presence where visual observations and other sampling techniques have not, but eDNA is currently insufficient

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## Mapping Salmon Habitats, continued

for AWC nominations primarily because potential detection error (false positives) in the absence of physical presence of fish, lack of defensible abundance measures to meet the “two-fish-in-hand” standard, and inability to distinguish life stages of species. However, the utility of eDNA to assist in planning where to target fish surveys to fill data gaps in the AWC is unprecedented. The AWC staff plan to start tracking eDNA collection locations and results so that information can be displayed in the online mapper along with other useful data.

Recently, AWC staff consulted with the Alaska Conservation Center and the Indigenous Sentinel Network to help develop a “Fish Observation” Application users could install on their phone to record fish observations and submit a nomination. Completed in 2022, partners have collected observations used in AWC nominations in 2022–2024. The app was designed for “citizen observers,” non-professional observers interested in documenting their fish observations to help fill information gaps in the AWC. Prompts guide users through the basic information needed for nominations, including location data and photographs. This has been a good test of developing software geared towards AWC

### AFS Alaska Chapter Awards

The AFS Alaska Chapter is seeking nomination for awards to recognize excellence in professional performance and outstanding contributions to Alaska fisheries. The Awards Committee is responsible for the Meritorious Service Award, Alaska Chapter Service Award, the Best Student Presentation Awards for papers and posters presented at the annual Alaska Chapter meeting, and Almost Darwin Award. The nomination deadline is February 15. More information on the individual awards and the nomination process may be found at <https://afs-alaska.org/about-us/committees/awards-committee/>.

### AFS Alaska Chapter Meeting

March 17–21, 2025 in Ketchikan, AK

nominations and what hurdles exist when adapting the AWC process to better use new technologies.

If there is one take away message, it’s that the AWC still contains data gaps in select locations across Alaska and is dependent on observers submitting nominations to help fill those gaps. Typically, these are more remote, harder to reach regions of the state. But even in water bodies that are already in the AWC, information may be missing about all the anadromous species and life-stages which may use that water body. Anyone who observes anadromous species, especially locations of juvenile rearing habitats and observations of species engaged in spawning, is strongly encouraged to submit an AWC nomination, and AWC staff are always happy to help guide observers through the nomination process.

*Joe Giefer, a habitat biologist with the ADF&G Division of Sport Fish in Anchorage, has worked with ADF&G since 2001, assisted with multiple AFFI surveys since 2005, was hired into the AFFI program in 2013, and was the AFFI programs project biologist from 2015 to 2019. Joe has a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Utah State University. Mr. Giefer currently manages the department’s Anadromous Water Program.*

### Wally Noerenberg Award for Fishery Excellence

The Wally Noerenberg Award for Fishery Excellence (WNA), the highest award of the AFS Alaska Chapter, is bestowed as a special honor on individuals who have made great and outstanding contributions to Alaska fisheries. The WNA was established in 1981 by resolution of the Chapter membership. Contributions by nominees may include: scientific research; technological development; species and habitat management; innovations in harvesting, processing, or marketing; academics and fishery education; or involvement in national and international affairs affecting Alaska fisheries. Information about the formation and administration of the Wally Noerenberg Award and Committee is included in the 1981 resolution that established the Award, and in amendments and resolutions adopted by the Chapter membership during the 1983 and 1989 business meetings. [Nominations](#) are due February 15, 2025.

## Welcome Back to Audra Brase

Audra Brase is rejoining the AFS Alaska Chapter executive committee after a bit of a hiatus. For those of you who don't remember, she served as Chapter President in 2010–2011 and coordinated the November 2010 annual meeting in Juneau. Audra is looking forward to this opportunity to serve as Past-President a second time to provide legacy knowledge to the group, mentorship to the students/young professionals, and to assist with planning the 2026 AFS Alaska Chapter meeting in Fairbanks.

Audra has worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for over 25 years with stints in Douglas and Cordova, but the majority of her career has been in Fairbanks where she has spent the last nine years as the Regional Supervisor of the Habitat Section. Audra supervises all ADF&G fish habitat permitting for mining, oil & gas, transportation, and other large projects throughout the Interior and Northern Alaska. In the summer Audra still dons her waders and participates in aquatic biomonitoring at various mines and/or exploration prospects throughout the region. Audra received her M.S. degree in Fisheries from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Audra and her husband Mike have two grown children, and they spend a lot of time fishing, hunting, and just hanging out at their family-built cabins near Nenana and Delta Junction. Audra loves photography, and when she's not flailing a fishing rod around, you'll find her focusing her camera on the aurora, wildlife, or her latest travel adventure. 📷



*Audra Brase returning to serve as Past-President beginning March 2025.*

## 51st AFS Alaska Chapter Meeting

The 51st Annual Meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society will be held in Ketchikan, AK, during March 17–21, 2025. The meeting theme is “Our Collective Land and Sea: Weaving Fish, Habitat, and People.” Meeting registration is now open with discounted fees for early registering ending February 21, 2025.

You are also invited to submit symposia or workshop ideas that will encourage the sharing of research, education and outreach, policies, or initiatives that address themes of sustainability, innovation, or other topics that bolster our collective understanding of Alaska's fisheries and aquatic resources. Symposium organizers may

consider a variety of formats. Some topics may best align as traditional oral presentations to an audience as either long talks (10–12 minutes) or short talks (4–6 minutes), or some combination. Other topics may be better as panel discussions or round-table dialogues. Workshops are welcome as either in-person, virtual, or hybrid options and may focus on topics of current or general interest, training, or discussions beneficial to our fisheries professionals, or other aspects. Please direct any questions to [presidentelect@afs-alaska.org](mailto:presidentelect@afs-alaska.org).

Links for both meeting registration and submitting ideas for symposia/workshops are available at <https://afs-alaska.org/>. 📷

## NPRB Graduate Student Research Awards

The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) has announced the availability of the 2025 Graduate Student Research Awards. These student awards support scientific and scholarly research that informs effective management and sustainable use of marine resources in North Pacific waters. Awards are \$26,000 each with at least six student recipients to be selected in May 2025. Funds may be used for graduate student stipend and standard benefits, tuition or required university fees, research-related travel, supplies, and laboratory analyses. Students must be enrolled in a graduate degree program at an accredited U.S. university or college at the time of submission in order to be eligible. The application deadline is February 26, 2025. [More information is available here.](#) 📷

## Seeking Nominations for Alaska Chapter Vice President and Student Representative

Are you interested in helping advance the fisheries profession in Alaska, building your professional network, gaining leadership experience, and putting on an engaging and fun annual meeting? Then consider joining the leadership of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. If you have a friend or colleague who would be great at this but might not step up on their own without a little encouragement, then nominate them! We're now seeking nominations and self-nominations for two positions on our Executive Committee: Vice President and Student Representative. The chapter will hold elections for these positions in February 2025 for terms starting at the Annual Meeting in March 2025.

Vice President is the first position in a four-year term on the Executive Committee. The Vice President advances to become President-Elect, then President, and finally Past President. The next Vice President will chair the 2027 Annual Meeting of the AFS Alaska Chapter, to be held in Southcentral or Western Alaska. This is a high-profile and rewarding role with many opportunities for professional development and Chapter-supported travel within and outside of Alaska.

The Student Representative serves for one

year as a liaison between the Student Subunit and the AFS Alaska Chapter. The next Student Representative will help to plan and coordinate student involvement at the 2026 AK AFS Annual Meeting, which will be held in Fairbanks. The Student Representative may also receive travel support to represent the Alaska Chapter at the AFS Western Division Annual Meeting in Westminster, CO (May 11-15, 2025).

Who is welcome in the Chapter leadership? You are! We want our leadership to reflect the breadth and professional and personal diversity of the fisheries profession in Alaska. We currently have strong agency and academic representation, and folks employed by tribal organizations, the private sector, and non-profits are particularly encouraged to self-nominate. Want to get involved, but not quite ready to join the leadership? Serving on an annual meeting planning team, joining a committee, and being involved in the Student Subunit are all great preparation for a future leadership role in the Chapter.

To nominate yourself or a colleague, or just to learn a little more about what's involved, reach out to Erik Schoen at [president@afs-alaska.org](mailto:president@afs-alaska.org) or any Chapter officer. 🐟

## Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

The Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Program is designed for graduate students with an interest in ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes resources and in national policy decisions affecting those resources. Eligible graduate students from any discipline will receive a year of paid experience from February 1, 2026, to January 31, 2027, in the legislative and executive branches of government. Recent appointments were in Washington, D.C., working on ocean issues with U.S. Congressional offices or with an executive branch, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

or National Science Foundation. To be eligible, students must be enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program at any point between the start of the 2024 fall term and the application deadline. Eligible applicants enrolled at an Alaska institution planning to apply should contact Alaska Sea Grant Associate Director Molly Cain.

Additional information on the Knauss program is available at <https://alaskaseagrant.org/education/awards-fellowships/knauss/>. The application deadline is February 19, 2025. 🐟

## Fish of the Week!

Join us every Monday for our Fish of the Week podcast! We get to know all the fish — how they live in Alaska, what habitats they use, what they eat, and where they go and why. Everything you need to know to appreciate and conserve these fish and be a successful angler.

[We've got lots of fish stories.](#)





## Student Subunit Happenings

*Amber Perk, Student Subunit Representative*

This past semester, the Student Subunit hosted a variety of engaging activities to foster community and learning among its members. The events kicked off with an educational salmon hatchery tour in both Fairbanks and Juneau, where participants gained insights into hatchery operations. To celebrate the fall season, the group organized a fun-filled pumpkin decorating evening, allowing members to showcase their creativity while socializing in a relaxed setting. Rounding out the semester with a fish-themed film night, students gathered for an afternoon of thought-provoking documentaries. The semester flew by, but we still have plenty of ideas reserved for next semester including professional development events, educational trainings, social activities, and the student retreat. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up with the latest announcements!

### Upcoming Student Subunit Officer Elections

As we approach the halfway point of this academic year, it is time for us to start thinking about officer elections. We plan to hold elections before the end of Spring semester to allow for some overlap between incoming and outgoing officers, with new officers taking over for the 2025-2026 academic year. Officers of the Subunit include a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison. An additional liaison from other University of Alaska campuses may be added as needed to ensure geographical inclusion. Officers must be members of the American Fisheries Society in good standing. If you are interested in hearing more about these positions, reach out to the officers to hear more about their experiences. Contact information for officers can be found on the Alaska AFS website.

### Nominations for Student Representative

To continue on the topic of elections, your time with me as your Student Representative is more than halfway over. Although the most exciting part (the annual meeting in March!) is still to come, we are seeking nominations and self-nominations for this position. The Student Representative serves for one year as a liaison between the Student Subunit and the Alaska Chapter. The next Representative will help plan and coordinate student involvement



*AFS Alaska Chapter Student Representative Amber Perk and her dog, Denali. Photo from Amber Perk.*

in the 2026 Annual Meeting, which will be held in Fairbanks. The Representative may also receive travel support to represent the Chapter at the Western Division Annual Meeting in Westminster, CO (May 11-15, 2025). Elections will be held in February for terms starting at the Annual Meeting in March 2025. If you are interested in hearing more about this position, feel free to reach out to me at [student@afs-alaska.org](mailto:student@afs-alaska.org).

### Student Subunit Art Contest

Do you have a passion for art? Specifically, fisheries related art? Do the doodles in the corners of your papers often include salmon, grayling, oysters, kelp, crabs, rivers, oceans, DNA, and/or other fishy subjects? Are you interested in eternal fame and glory as the creator of the newest AK AFS Student Subunit sticker? This competition could be for you!

The Student Subunit is calling all artists to submit original fisheries-related art. We are looking for a cool design that all sorts of fishy folks would be interested in purchasing, so no need to include "AK AFS Student Subunit" in the artwork. The winners will have the honor of seeing their artwork made into stickers (and possibly other swag) to be sold by the Student Subunit at events like the Annual Alaska Chapter Meeting. These funds will be used to support student events and activities. Our January 2025 Student Subunit meeting will be an art reveal and celebration for all the artists who participated in the competition.

Submissions are due by noon on January 12, 2025. A poll will be sent out to students for public voting the following week and winners will be announced in late January.

Please submit a PDF of your artwork that can be displayed appropriately during the voting period. Winners will be asked to share high-definition files once they are chosen. Artists may submit multiple art pieces if they choose to do so. If you choose to

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## Student Subunit Happenings, continued

submit multiple art pieces, please fill this form out once for each piece submitted so that the correct title can be assigned to your submissions. Prizes will include: 1st Place - \$75 Amazon Gift Card + Stickers with Your Artwork; Runner Up - \$25 Amazon Gift Card + Stickers with Your Artwork. Please email [Elena Eberhardt](mailto:Elena.Eberhardt@alaska.edu) or [Amber Perk](mailto:Amber.Perk@alaska.edu) with any questions. We look forward to seeing your wonderful artwork and we appreciate your participation!

## Preparing for the Annual Meeting

Travel awards are available for students to attend the Annual Meeting in Ketchikan (March 17-21, 2025), as well as the Alaska Chapter Student Retreat, which will be held in Ketchikan the weekend prior to the Annual Meeting. Travel award funding may cover the costs of flights, double-occupancy lodging, and/or meeting registration for both undergraduate and graduate students up to \$1,000. To be eligible, applicants must (1) be enrolled as a full-time student in the Spring 2025 semester, (2) be a member (in good standing) of the American Fisheries Society – Alaska Chapter, (3) be available to volunteer during the conference, and (4) demonstrate financial need. If a student is requesting financial assistance for registration, flights, and lodging, we are asking for 12 hours of volunteer service, with at least 6 hours during the week of the meeting. If a student is only requesting financial assistance for registration (i.e., they have their own travel assistance or live local to Ketchikan), we are asking for 6 hours of volunteer service, with at least 3 hours during the week of the meeting. Additional criteria that will be considered when determining travel awards will include whether a student plans to present research at the conference, whether the student has demonstrated involvement in the Student Subunit/Chapter/Society, and whether a student identifies as part of an underrepresented identity within fisheries. A Google Form will be shared at a later date via email for students to apply for Travel Award funding. As part of the volunteer hours, silent auction solicitations are underway by the dedicated student volunteers who help make these conferences possible! To get involved, please contact me at [student@afs-alaska.org](mailto:student@afs-alaska.org).

## Meacham Family

### AFS Student Travel Fund

The Meacham Family AFS Student Travel Fund is an endowment of the AFS Alaska Chapter established to prioritize the growth and professional development of student Chapter members by supporting student travel and networking opportunities. This fund allows donors to contribute to student development with confidence that their donations will do exactly what they intended.

The fund was established in 2023 with a pledge of \$30,000 by Charles H. Meacham and Charles P. Meacham, retired fisheries scientists who dedicated most of their decorated careers to Alaska fisheries. With your help, their gift will grow into a reliable source of funding to support students and strengthen the future of our profession.

Building on this founding donation, the Chapter is seeking an initial goal of \$85,000 in base principle, which will be held in perpetuity. After reaching this initial goal, student travel endowment awards will be disbursed annually, using up to 2% of the market value of the fund. After the fund principal reaches an ultimate goal of \$125,000, the amount available for awards will rise to 4%, providing a stable and permanent source of support for student travel. The fund's guiding principles state that awards will be made to graduate and undergraduate students intending a career in a fisheries-related field, with priority given to students attending Alaska campuses or conducting Alaska-specific research.

[Find more information here.](#)

### Alaska Mentorship Program

The University of Alaska Fairbanks' College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (UAF CFOS) continues to partner with the AFS Alaska Chapter's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (AK AFS DEIC) and the Alaska Student Chapter of the Society for Marine Mammalogy (AKSMM) on a joint peer mentorship program. This program pairs interested mentors with students/early career professionals and promotes mentorship across the state!

If you are interested in being a mentor, a mentee (receiving mentorship), or both, please [fill out the form](#) by January 24, 2025. If you are already in the program, [please let us know how it's going](#).

There will be a Mentorship mixer at the March AFS Alaska Chapter Meeting. Questions: [deic@afs-alaska.org](mailto:deic@afs-alaska.org) or [gsullaway@alaska.edu](mailto:gsullaway@alaska.edu).

## Seeking Host for National Center for Ecologically Sustainable Water Conservation and Management

The Instream Flow Council (IFC) and American Fisheries Society (AFS) request statements of interest and qualifications (“RFIQ”) from institutions and organizations (or teams of institutions and organizations) that wish to be considered for hosting a National Center for Ecologically Sustainable Water Conservation & Management (Center) on a long-term basis or serving as a network affiliate. Network affiliates may be located in North America outside of the United States. The objectives for this Center encompass providing key interdisciplinary leadership, training, research, development, networking, and support functions to empower water stakeholders to achieve ecologically sustainable water conservation and management outcomes. Water stakeholders include entities and individuals participating in or impacted by the interdisciplinary scientific, legal, institutional, and public involvement elements and processes that govern water allocation and use decisions and outcomes. Overarching socio-economic elements are also integrated. To download RFIQ and for related background information, processes, timelines, and application instructions to apply, go to <https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/training-center-rfiq/>.

### Environmental Concerns Corner

*Sue Mauger and Joel Markis*

As we transition into a federal administration that strongly emphasizes resource extraction and deregulation, the role of fisheries professionals in Alaska becomes even more critical. Our state’s permitting processes and the public’s involvement serve as safeguards against unchecked development that could jeopardize Alaska’s freshwater and marine ecosystems and the communities reliant on them. Fisheries professionals are uniquely positioned to advocate for sustainable practices, ensuring that decisions affecting our waters and fisheries are informed by science, community input, and long-term resource stewardship. It is our responsibility to uphold these processes, emphasizing that Alaska’s fisheries are a cornerstone of both our economy and our way of life.

One recent example of the power of public input in Alaska’s permitting and regulatory framework is the recent completion of the ore haul road corridor report for the Manh Choh project, as highlighted by KUAC. This project, which relied on research and public consultation via a 30-person Technical Advisory Committee, underscores the potential for thoughtful and inclusive regulatory processes, even in an era of heightened pressure to expand resource development. The report demonstrates how communities, scientists, and policymakers can collaborate to balance resource extraction with environmental stewardship. As we prepare for a pro-resource extraction era, projects like this provide hope that a commitment to transparency and public participation can guide responsible

development while protecting Alaska’s unique and invaluable natural resources. Projects like this also point to a duty that we all share to advocate for science to drive policy and decisions.

A list of a few Alaska Projects to keep an eye on:

- Manh Choh / Kennearas Gold - Proposed Road Hauling Gold Ore from Tetlin to Fairbanks [Road Analysis Executive Summary](#)
- Graphite One - Proposed Open Pit Graphite Mine North of Nome [AK Public Story on Graphite One](#)
- Hecla’s Greens Creek Mine - Large Silver Mine on Admiralty Island [KTOO Story - Seeking Approval for Additional Mineral Exploration](#)

### Fishes of Alaska

The seminal book *Fishes of Alaska* (Mecklenburg et al. 2002) was one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken by the AFS Alaska Chapter and served to update the presence and identification of freshwater and marine fish species found in both freshwater and marine habitats of Alaska. While some range extensions and revisions for more rare species have undoubtedly occurred, this book remains a core reference for identification of fish species found in Alaska. This book should be in the library of every Alaskan fishery and aquatic resource professional. *Fishes of Alaska* is now available from the AFS bookstore at the low price of \$30, plus \$8 shipping. Order at <https://fisheries.org/bookstore/all-titles/afs-unit-publications/x53027xm/>.



## Our Land & Sea: Traditional Foods Potluck

The DEI committee is excited to host a Traditional Foods Potluck during the lunch on mArch 18, 2025, at this year’s Annual AFS Chapter Meeting! We invite you to bring a dish from your culture or heritage, food from your local watershed, or any dish that holds personal significance to you. You’ll have the option to fill out a card that explains its

story, as well as a list of its ingredients. We hope to create a relaxed and welcoming environment that helps set an inclusive and thoughtful tone for this year’s conference: “Our Collective Land and Sea: Weaving Fish, Habitat, and People.” All are welcome to participate, and more details will be shared soon. 🗨️


### Meetings and Events

#### Alaska Marine Science Symposium



January 27–31, 2025. The 2025 Alaska Marine Science Symposium will be held in Anchorage, AK. More information is at <https://www.alaskamarinescience.org/>.

#### Alaska Forum on the Environment

February 3–7, 2025. This will be a hybrid event.  More information is available at <https://akforum.org/alaska-forum-on-the-environment/>.

#### American Fisheries Society Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting

March 17–20, 2025. The 51st annual meeting will be held in Ketchikan, AK. More information will be posted at <https://afs-alaska.org/>.



#### American Fisheries Society Western Division

May 17–20, 2025. The annual meeting of the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society will be held in Westminster, CO. More information is at <https://wdafs.org/>. 🗨️



Oncorhynchus back issues at <https://afs-alaska.org/newsletter/>

### AFS Code of Conduct

The Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee (EPCC) of the American Fisheries Society has developed a code of conduct for our meetings and AFS-sponsored functions, whether virtual or in person. This brief document is available at <https://fisheries.org/about/governance/afs-meetings-code-of-conduct/>. Please read through this document to ensure that we are collectively working to build awareness of this policy to ensure that all AFS-related gatherings are a respectful and inclusive experience for everyone. If you have questions, reach out directly to the EPCC Chair Brian Missildine for support at [brian.missildine@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:brian.missildine@dfw.wa.gov).

### 2024-25 Alaska Chapter Officers

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Feel free to contact the Executive Committee members.

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### ONCORHYNCHUS

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