

2008 NOAA Fisheries Team Member of the Year Nomination Narrative

Nominee's Name: Last, First, Middle:

Nomination Category:

Nance, Shelly L.

Scientific/Technical Compares to GS 1-10; WG and Demo Pay Band Equivalents

Address at Least One of the Following Factors in the Justification Below.

Contributions to NOAA and NOAA Fisheries programs that resulted in:

- Enhanced economic viability of commercial and/or recreational fishing;
- Enhanced public appreciation for the mission of the agency;
- Enhanced safety or health of NOAA Fisheries workforce;
- Enhanced morale of the NOAA Fisheries workforce or inspired excellence in its members;
- Enhanced stewardship of NOAA Fisheries protected/managed species/associated habitats;
- Improved accuracy, reliability, or reproducibility of scientific results;
- Improved customer service;
- Increased efficiency and/or reduced cost of operations;
- Improved equal employment opportunity or diversity in NOAA Fisheries;
- Strengthened ties to other NOAA elements or NOAA Fisheries constituents; and/or
- Brought unusual credit to the NOAA Fisheries or members of its workforce.

During calendar year 2008, Shelly Nance was contracted to work with three (3) different research units in three (3) different Divisions at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC). In each case, Shelly carried expertise and knowledge across research and Division lines to increase the accuracy and reliability of the scientific research that was being conducted, consequently improving the efficiency of the work and reducing the operating costs for each of those research efforts. While engaged in these efforts, Shelly maintained the highest cooperative and “can-do” attitude, which consistently reinforced a team atmosphere and elevated the morale of her co-workers.

As a member of the Marine Biotoxins Program (MBP) within the Environmental Conservation Division (ECD), Shelly helped to hone and implement the field protocols for environmental sampling of phytoplankton and plankton-associated biotoxins. The quality and reliability of biotoxin analyses and subsequent environmental modeling efforts rely on carefully implemented methods including proper sample storage. Because Shelly understands the importance of careful sample collection and storage as well as the constraints and demands of field sampling, she ensured that sample collection and processing was consistent with standard operating procedures. This assurance is necessary for the validity of time series analysis and modeling of harmful algal blooms (HABs), supporting a critical mission of the MBP (<http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/hab/outreach/index.html>). She has assisted with the successful Oceans and Human Health seminar series, a joint effort between the University of Washington and NWFSC Oceans and Human Health programs. Her persistence and attention to detail ensured that speakers felt welcome and all logistical details were in place for these twice-monthly seminars. Shelly's contribution to this series helped Center researchers reach out to both the scientific community and stakeholders, a critical component of the Nation's Oceans and Human Health program.

In a second role within the MBP in 2008, Shelly contributed to the successful implementation of zebrafish as a model test species for marine biotoxins. Shelly's initiative, attention to detail, and ability to work with others contributed directly to the success of the project. Specifically, Shelly worked across divisions and sought out expertise from other Center researchers to develop an effective procedure for drawing blood from zebrafish, extracting toxins, and quantifying biotoxin levels in blood, all of which were essential for the completion of the project. Shelly was also involved in other research projects that required careful preparation of samples, analysis, organization, quality assurance of data, and publication of results. In all cases, Shelly was exceptionally reliable, organized and willing to go the extra mile to ensure the quality of

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During the early part of 2008, Shelly worked with the Marine Mammal Program (MMP) in the Conservation Biology Division (CBD). She applied her expertise from the MBP to an annual shipboard marine mammal survey cruise, which targeted the determination of the distribution of endangered southern resident killer whales in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The program sought her participation in the 2008 survey because she proved to be a valuable team member during the collection of oceanographic data on the 2006 and 2007 surveys. This survey is an important part of the Center's work to improve our understanding of habitat quality in the whales' winter range. This effort has numerous temporal and infrastructure constraints, and accurate, efficient sample and data collection are critical. Because Shelly is an effective and cooperative field scientist, she successfully accomplished that mission.

Throughout much of 2008 and currently, Shelly has served as a Fisheries Biologist II with the Microbiology Program (MP) in the Resource Enhancement & Utilization Technologies Division (REUTD), where she has been working on a project to assess pathogen infection in Chinook salmon at different life history stages from several watersheds. This project has required her involvement in extensive field collection, sample handling and custody, laboratory processing and analysis, and data management. The integrity of the project relies on Shelly's attentiveness, a willingness to work with a range of scientists and environmental conditions, and the ability to anticipate and solve problems. Shelly has guaranteed that project milestones and timetables are achieved, often ahead of schedule, with exceptional enthusiasm and efficiency. She has accomplished this by identifying potential difficulties and finding solutions. In spite of the demanding field schedule, she has committed and participated in many of the sampling dates, and when she could not personally attend, she assumed the responsibility of training and preparing participating scientists to collect samples. During fieldwork, Shelly went beyond the duties associated with her project, because she is committed to the highest quality science. For example, when a multidisciplinary sampling project in Skagit Bay began in the Spring of 2008, she realized that there was no one onboard the vessel who was familiar with phytoplankton water sampling. Applying her experience from the MBP cruises, Shelly configured the equipment and collected water samples, in addition to her fish tissue sampling duties. Furthermore, she trained several scientists on the water sampling protocol, ensuring that properly collected phytoplankton samples were obtained each month. Shelly is typically the last person to go home at the end of sampling day, because she is making sure that all samples are correctly logged and stored.

In the laboratory, Shelly is equally conscientious about assuring scientific quality. She understands that an ounce of planning is worth a pound of remediation, and she vigorously validates protocols before implementation. Her attentiveness guarantees that the sample processing and measurements used for our infection assessments are sensitive and accurate. Shelly has the opportunity to interact and train undergraduate students from the University of Washington who are serving internships in the laboratory. By freely sharing her knowledge, experience, and wonderful sense of humor with them, she is both a mentor and colleague.

To the delight of everyone who works with her, Shelly is a warm, thoughtful, and competent co-worker. Her enthusiasm for science and joy in teamwork is a positive influence on all of her colleagues. She fosters teamwork through her own example, and keeps folks smiling, even at the end of a long and arduous day. Shelly has contributed to the high quality of NOAA's science, and she has amiably spurred her co-workers to excel in their own scientific endeavors. Shelly Nance is the superior candidate for Team Member of the Year at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center!