

2008 NOAA Fisheries Employee of the Year Nomination Narrative

Nominee's Name: Last, First, Middle:

Marsh, Douglas M.

Nomination Category:

Program Employees – Management/Scientific/Technical

Address at Least One of the Following Factors in the Justification Below.**Contributions to NOAA and NOAA Fisheries programs that resulted in:****For Non-Management:**

- 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 NOAA Fisheries or members of its workforce.

For Management:

- Demonstrated exceptional leadership, development of the workforce, and/or program management.

Doug Marsh has worked as a Research Fishery Biologist in the Fish Ecology Division for nearly 17.5 years. Although little known to staff at the Center because he spends so much time in the field, he deserves the 2008 employee of the year award because of his status as an 'unsung hero' without whom the Center would lack much of the data used to evaluate the effects of the Columbia River hydropower system on salmon stocks or develop recommendations for operations that will maximize adult returns. Doug had complete responsibility to design, set up, hire and direct staff (60-70 people), and develop all protocols for PIT-tagging more than 200,000 juvenile salmon and steelhead migrating from the Snake River basin for 6 different research proposals that totaled nearly \$4.1 M in reimbursable research funds. This was a monumental undertaking to assure random samples of fish were collected, tagged, and released for each of the studies which mostly co-occurred. He was also the principal field investigator on 4 of the proposals, so had the additional responsibility to analyze adult return data from fish marked in earlier years, then write contract reports to the funding agencies. Conducting these studies required Doug to write 6 federal ESA permit applications and reports. Doug's efforts in 2008 were a continuation of outstanding efforts for which he has had responsibility for a number of years, but in 2008 he raised the bar even higher. Doug greatly improved accuracy, reliability, and reproducibility of scientific results in the conduct of the research. His efforts assured an unbiased marking of fish so that different treatment groups reflected conditions tested...fish released to the Snake River and fish placed into barges for transportation around dams. The need to have unbiased test animals cannot be overstated. Doug's direct efforts to develop the marking strategies and direct the efforts were outstanding. Several other research projects also rely on fish marked by his staff...including the critical studies to estimate survival of juvenile fish that migrate downstream through the lower Snake and Columbia River dams. Analyses and results derived from these studies also depend on having unbiased test fish that mirror the untagged population of juvenile migrants.

In addition to the marking of juvenile fish in 2008, Doug also developed and maintained a data base to track adult returns detected at Columbia River dams; fish that returned from more than 200,000 fish PIT-tagged as juveniles that his crews had marked in previous years. The data base allowed him to conduct analyses that showed how differences in adult returns and timing related to conditions juveniles experience during their outmigration. The combined research efforts—juvenile and adults – played a critical role in developing the 2008 Hydropower Biological Opinion.

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Narrative (continued)

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Further, because of his expertise in fish tagging, Doug represented NOAA on the multi agency PIT Tag Steering Committee and presented a paper at the *Advances of Fish Tagging & Marking Technology Symposium* in Auckland, New Zealand during 2008.

Doug's research efforts in the field and results of his research result in a large amount of credit extended to NOAA Fisheries and its workforce. In the Pacific Northwest region, particularly in conjunction with research on salmonids in the Columbia River basin, the NOAA field biologists set the standard for excellence in field work and activities. Further, and possibly more importantly, the excellence in field work would not have occurred if not for Doug providing the conditions and leadership that enhanced the morale of the NOAA Fisheries workforce. Top-notch research doesn't just occur. It takes leadership to inspire excellence in the field staff. Because of Doug's dedication and hard work...he leads by example... he has inspired a can-do attitude in the staff and they perform at an extremely high level.