



# How To Become a Young Professional

## What is a Young Professional?

The American Fisheries Society's (AFS) Young Professional (YP) membership is a special membership category for fisheries professionals at the beginning of their careers. This unique category is defined as any member who graduated from school within the past three years. Being a Young Professional provides a segue between Student and Regular membership in AFS, and understanding the changes and benefits is essential for you to take advantage of the great opportunities associated with being a Young Professional.

## Becoming a Young Professional

Entering the working world is a big change. Many students who were AFS members during school find themselves overwhelmed and underfunded in their new jobs. Support or permission to travel may be limited or nonexistent. The benefits of AFS, which seemed so obvious when you were a student, seem to wane in comparison with the cost of membership and meeting attendance given your entry-level salary.

**The Young Professional membership exists to help you through this transition.**

Young Professionals receive numerous perks that are unavailable to Regular members. Think of it as a "stair-step" progression between Student and Regular membership.

Let's start with membership. Young Professional membership in AFS was \$40.00 in 2014 (\$50.00 for members outside North America). Compare that to \$20.00 for Student membership (\$30.00 outside North America) and \$80.00 for Regular membership (\$95.00 outside North America). That's a pretty good deal!

Now, let's talk about meeting registration. Prior to 2014, registration costs were identical to Regular member registration costs. Thanks to the work of some dedicated AFS members/staff, YP members received a discount for the first time in 2014, attending the Annual Meeting in Quebec City, Quebec, for only \$205.00. Compare that to \$155.00 for Student members and \$510.00 for Regular members. Also note that AFS membership pays for itself in cost savings. Non-member YPs (i.e., those who are within three years post-graduation but not AFS members)



had to pay \$640.00 for meeting registration.

Another major change you will notice is in your journal access. Student members receive free online access to the AFS's peer-reviewed journals, InfoBase, and Fisheries magazine. AFS's journals include Transactions of the American Fisheries Society, North American Journal of Fisheries Management, Journal of Aquatic Animal Health, and North American Journal of Aquaculture (formerly known as The Progressive Fish-Culturist). InfoBase includes all journal content older than five years from these journals, while online journal access includes newer content. You will continue to receive Fisheries magazine for free, but InfoBase and online journal access require subscription and payment each year. In 2014, each online subscription cost \$25.00. You can learn more about subscription rates on the AFS website at: <http://fisheries.org/docs/wp/Journals-web-page-2015.pdf>.



So, being a YP is indeed different from being a Student in AFS. Although it doesn't come with all the discounts of student membership, it has some great perks and will help prepare you for Regular membership when the time comes. But what else is there?

## New Opportunities in AFS

As a YP, you are an important link in the chain of membership. You are shifting from being a mentee to a mentor. Your leadership can be energetic and full of fresh ideas, and you may finally find yourself in a position to make them happen through your professional work and involvement in AFS. Young Professional involvement in AFS provides student members with an example to emulate, especially if you maintain membership in the Student Subsection (in which you are welcome). Your value is reflected in the variety of opportunities the AFS has developed specifically for YPs.

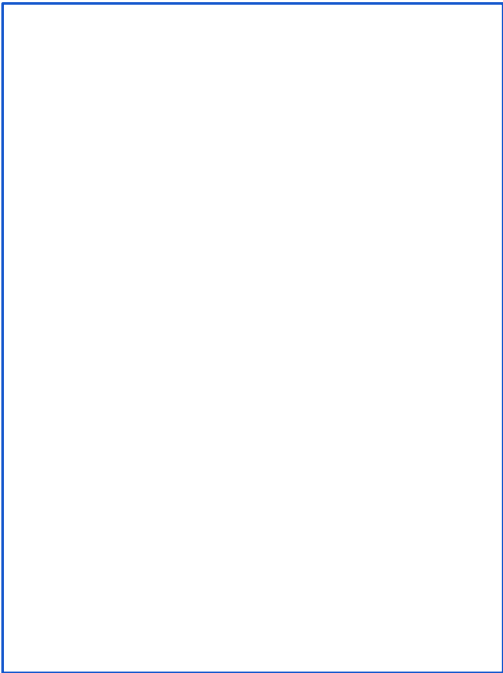
- Young Professional Travel Award, sponsored by the Education Section
- Young Professional Exchange Program, sponsored by the Fisheries Management Section
- Emerging Leader Mentorship Award Program
- New leadership and mentoring opportunities

The YP Travel Award was established to promote attendance at the Annual Meeting of YPs who have made substantial contributions to the fisheries field. The award provides up to \$1,000 in travel support for one individual. Learn more about the YP Travel Award at <http://education.fisheries.org/awards/young-professionals-travel-award/>.

The YP Exchange Program is a new international exchange program by which young professionals can interact with other professional fisheries societies to disseminate and gather information, techniques and practices. Each year, a single YP will be chosen to represent the Fisheries Management Section and American Fisheries Society at another society's meeting (e.g., the Institute of Fisheries Management in Great Britain). More information on this opportunity is forthcoming from the Fisheries Management Section.

The Emerging Leader Mentorship Award Program was designed to develop future leaders of the Society and fisheries profession as a whole and, while not limited to YPs, is an excellent opportunity well-suited to YPs. The program provides selected candidates an opportunity to participate for one year in activities of the Governing Board, including attending the Management Committee, Governing Board Retreat, and Governing Board meetings that are held in conjunction with the annual AFS Meeting. Keep an eye out for this award announcement!

Additional opportunities include running for Chapter or Section leadership, participation in committees, and involvement in mentorship activities. As a YP, your role in AFS is changing from being a mentee to the mentor, especially of students. Participate in the Annual Meeting's "Speed Mentoring" event as a mentor. Stay involved in the Student Subsection by serving as an officer or committee member. Help organize student-based events at the Annual Meeting, and then bring someone new along. Your continued involvement in AFS, regardless of its form, will be recognized and appreciated.



By:

Rebecca M. Krogman, Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Janice Kerns, Research Scientist, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point