



# Lone Star History of the Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

*Today is Tomorrow's Yesterday!*

Michele Nations, Texas Chapter Archivist/Historian, retired Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Inland Fisheries, MichNat.TCAFS@gmail.com

Ray Mathews, Volunteer, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; Former Fisheries Biologist/Ecologist, State of Texas, oceanrayaustin@gmail.com

## Brief Overview



The Texas Chapter journey started on November 5, 1975, at Rudder Tower on the campus of Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas, when more than 100 fisheries workers from across the state met to form the new statewide chapter. The official chapter charter was approved by the parent society in September 1976.

The objectives of the American Fisheries Society are defined in Article I of the Constitution of the organization and include the promotion of conservation, development, and wise use of the fisheries; the promotion and evaluation of the development and advancement of all branches of fisheries science and practice; and gather and dissemination of knowledge about fisheries science and practice. The founders of the Texas Chapter added to Article 1.2 with "to encourage information exchange among members of the Society residing in, working in, or having a professional interest in the State of Texas."



Membership has ranged from 83 charter members to over 200. Presently, the Texas Chapter has fourteen standing committees: Awards, Continuing Education, Editorial, Endowments, History, Internet and Audio/Visual, Issues (includes Exotic Species and Stocks at Risk subcommittees), Membership, Newsletters, Nominating, Pond Management, Publicity/Exhibits, Scholarship, and Student Outreach (<https://units.fisheries.org/tx/officers-and-chairs/>).

Each year the Chapter hosts an annual meeting, which typically comprises continuing education classes, technical sessions, a poster session, vendor displays, banquet, and a business meeting. The technical sessions include over thirty scientific papers presented by students and professionals. Fundraising auctions and raffles have also been an important element of these meetings, with proceeds going toward the funding of student scholarships.



Dave Peterson, Chad Thomas, and Bruce Hysmith auctioning of the Sunfishes of Texas poster during the auction at the 2009 annual meeting in Fort Worth, TX.

The Chapter publishes a twice yearly newsletter and also disseminates information via its web site. Special publications, such as "Texas Farm Ponds: Stocking, Assessment, and Management Recommendations" have also been published in the past. A Proceedings of the Annual Chapter Meeting is also published each year (became non-gray literature in 1991), which includes all the technical papers that were submitted and reviewed for publication, now available online.

## Chapter Mission and Committee Goals

The Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society is committed to the conservation, development, and wise utilization of recreational and commercial fisheries, the promotion of all branches of fisheries science and practice, and the exchange and dissemination of knowledge about fish, fisheries, and related subjects.

The mission of the Chapter is carried out through fourteen standing committees. Ad hoc committees are also formed to meet needs of the Chapter as determined by the Executive Committee. Our collective expertise makes us a source of information for the public interested in aquatic topics and issues. Our Pond Management Committee developed the popular "Stocking and Management Recommendations for Texas Farm Ponds," and more recently the "Guide to Developing a Community Fisheries." We have an issues committee to develop positional statements for the Chapter on timely fisheries issues and an exotic fisheries ad hoc committee to compile, update, and provide information to members and the public. We encourage student participation through our Student Outreach Committee. The Endowments Committee is charged with raising funds for scholarships. The Publicity and Exhibits Committee solicits donations for the Chapter raffle and auction, which have been a great source of revenue for the endowment fund. The Scholarship Committee provides scholarships to worthy students at the Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels. The Continuing Education committee provides courses for professional training.

## Fishery Resources of Texas

Texas occupies a broad transition zone between several physiographic provinces in North American and encompass a large number of distinctive biotic provinces. Fishery habitats in Texas are possibly the most diverse in the nation. They range across a landscape with mountains, deserts, prairies, bottomland hardwood forest, swamps, springs, coastal marshes, and estuaries.

The freshwater fish fauna of Texas is conspicuous in its diversity across the large geographic area covered by the state, considerable range of habitat conditions, and complexity of hydrographic features. More than two-thirds of the 247 species of fishes are exclusively freshwater fishes. The remaining 78 species are estuarine or marine but may also be found in high salinity riverine environments. A precise separation is quite subjective, as many rivers (the Pecos, Brazos, and Wichita Rivers, for example) commonly have salinities higher than those in the tidally influenced bays along the northern coast of Texas (Sabine, Trinity, and Galveston Bays, for example). The salinity of Texas estuaries increases along a gradient toward the southern-most estuary, Laguna Madre, which is one of only four hypersaline estuaries in the world. Fish fauna have responded to this salinity gradient and habitat changes by evolving into a great diversity of species with complex niche specializations and a high degree of endemism.

The Texas Chapter AFS members recognize the great gift of this fisheries resource and the enormous responsibility we have in meeting with the objectives of the American Fisheries Society.

Year	President	Meeting Location
1975	Chapter Formation	Texas A & M
1976	Ed Bonn	Lake Brownwood
1977	Jim Davis	San Antonio
1978	Bill Rutledge	San Marcos
1979	Bobby Whiteside	Texas A & M
1980	Richard Noble	Arlington
1981	Charles Inman	Austin
1982	Gary Valentine	Kerrville
1983	Don Steinbach	Lake Texoma
1984	Gary Matlock	Port Aransas

  

Year	Event
1975	The Texas Chapter of the American Society was formed in November in College Station with 83 charter members.
1976	The first newsletter was published.
1978	The first annual proceedings was published.
1980	The Farm Pond Management Committee completed its first publication "Stocking and Management Recommendations for Texas Farm Ponds."
1983	The Texas Chapter held its ninth annual meeting jointly with the Oklahoma Chapter at the University of Oklahoma's Biological Station at Lake Texoma, the first meeting involving a chapter outside of Texas.
1984	A successful attempt was made to integrate coastal fisheries workers into the chapter by having the annual meeting at a coastal site for the first time.
1985	The first woman President of the Chapter, Maury Ferguson, was elected. Since then, five other women have served as Chapter President.
1986	The Chapter successfully undertook the task of elevating the Chapter Proceedings from "gray literature," which was uncitable in AFS journals, to peer reviewed literature.
1987	The Texas Chapter Scholarship Fund was established, and the first two college scholarships were awarded for \$150 each.
1990	The Texas Chapter held its second annual joint meeting with the Oklahoma Chapter.
1991	The Chapter joins with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. to host the 121 <sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the AFS in San Antonio.
1992	The Chapter joins with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. to host the 46 <sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Corpus Christi.
1995	The Texas Chapter won the Outstanding Chapter Award in the Southern Division of the AFS.
1996	The Texas Chapter held its third joint meeting with the Oklahoma Chapter.
1998	The Chapter went online with its own website ( <a href="http://www.sdafsa.org/tcafs">http://www.sdafsa.org/tcafs</a> ).
2000	The scholarship fund grew enabling the Chapter to award four \$500 college scholarships.
2001	The Texas Chapter held its first 3-chapter joint meeting with Arkansas and Louisiana.
2001	The Chapter celebrated its 25th anniversary.
2003	The Texas Chapter won the Outstanding Chapter Award in the Southern Division of the AFS.
2003	Clark Hubbs received a plaque recognizing his contributions to the Chapter and creation of the Clark Hubbs Student Research Award.
2004	Dr. Tim Bonner became the youngest member to receive the TCAFS Educator of the Year Award.
2004	Two Chapter members had newly described fish species named after them-Drs. Kirk Winemiller and Clark Hubbs.
2005	The Texas Chapter received the Outstanding Chapter Award from the Parent Society.
2005	The Patsy B. Hollandsworth Family Foundation made a large contribution to the Texas Chapter for student scholarships.
2006	The Texas Chapter hosted the Southern Division AFS in San Antonio.
2007	First Clark Hubbs Student Research Award presented.
2009	The Texas Chapter hosted the International Symposium on Golden Alga Prymnesium parvum Meeting in Fort Worth with speakers from around the world.
2009	Ray Mathews presented memorials for Clark Hubbs (1921-2008) and Dennis Pridden (1959-2008).
2009	SDAFS honored the Chapter for highest percentage of members registered in the Parent Society.
2010	The Texas Chapter received the Outstanding Large Chapter Award from the Parent Society.
2010	The Chapter received approval from the Parent Society to make the proceedings available in electronic format.
2010	Sportsmen's Club of Fort Worth became a new sponsor for the Chapter student scholarship awards.
2011	The first podcasts of plenary and technical presentations were made available starting with the 2011 annual meeting.
2011	The Procedural Handbook was separated into four stand-alone documents: 1. Chapter Purpose and Goals, 2. Bylaws, 3. Procedures, and 4. Lists of past presidents, meeting locations, and award/scholarship recipients.
2011	The Chapter is now on Facebook.
2013	New logo designed by Patrick Cooney, NC State University that combines the Guadalupe Bass (Inland Fisheries) and the Red Fish (Coastal Fisheries), plus the Lone Star flag of Texas.
2013	Annual meeting held in Montgomery on Lake Conroe attended by AFS President John Boreman, who spoke highly of the Chapter as serving as an example of full active member participation and professional involvement with current fisheries issues.



Golden Alga Panel: Top row: Bobby Farquhar (TPWD), Brian Van Zee (TPWD), Dr. David Sager (TPWD), Dr. Dave Hambright (Un. Of Oklahoma), Dr. Mario Sengco (Smithsonian Environmental Research Center), Bottom row: Tim Birdsong (TPWD), Dr. Wenche Eikrem (Un. Of Oslo, Norway), Prof. Edna Granell (Un. Of Kalmar, Sweden), Loraine Fries (TPWD), and Dr. Bryan Brooks (Baylor University, Texas)

