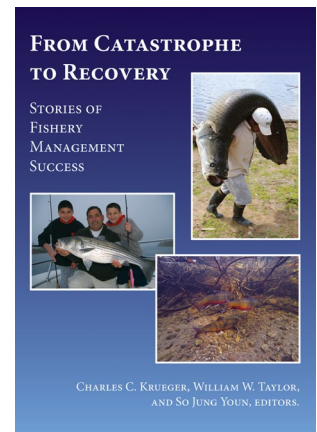


# From Catastrophe to Recovery: Stories of Fisheries Management Successes

C. C. Krueger, W. M. Taylor, and S. J. Youn, editors. American Fisheries Society, Bethesda, Maryland. 2019. 572 pages. US\$79 (AFS members \$55.30)



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The editors of this well-crafted book share their dissatisfaction with the conspicuous absence of fisheries success stories related by the media and by fisheries professionals themselves. The book is intended as a response to this track record, boasting 21 stories of fisheries management successes. As the editors state, the work stands in stark contrast to Examples of Unfortunate Fisheries Catastrophes.

A major asset of the compilation is the current and historic roles of the authors themselves. There was a clear effort to recruit people who were involved in (and in many cases were integral to) the recovery efforts being described. There is a real sense that the authors of these chapters are taking a hard look at their professional paths, taking stock of their work with their colleagues, and taking pride in their professional contributions. Because of this, the authors and the editors are an impressive team of contributors who merit attention.

What follows an introductory chapter is a series of chapters (stories) that describe some of the most significant fisheries challenges encountered over the past decades. These efforts are grouped into sections by water body type (rivers, lakes, Great Lakes, and marine). Though most stories are based in North America, notable exceptions (e.g., restoration of gargantuan Arapaima in Brazil and community fisheries in Cambodia) provide a welcome breadth.

While each chapter could be consumed individually, there is a surprising consistency among the offerings, lending an overall strength to the text. Each chapter begins with history, in some cases spanning centuries, thereby providing the reader with a flavor of what the fish (or fishery) was like. The usual anthropogenic culprits of ecological tragedy arrive (pollution, dams, overfishing, and climate change) until a critical point is reached. Through stories of science, cooperation, politics (and sometimes luck), advances are made and a measure of success achieved. Each chapter ends with a list of lessons learned. The need for effective science, the role of professional perseverance, and engagement with the public are all portrayed as critical ingredients for success.

All chapters are well written and informative; an accomplishment for both the authors and editors for this kind of work. Some chapters, however, are more transactional in the conveyance of information than others, and are more like a report. These chapters are, perhaps, less entertaining, but are an undeniably rich sources of information. The most effective chapters hit a balance between storytelling and information. Though it is not necessary for the reader to know that poorly prepared Sea Lamprey *Petromyzon marinus* led to lethal conflict among party goers, that Arapaima remains exist in archaeological digs, or that there was a concerted effort to remove wooden snags from the Ohio River, these story elements effectively integrated humans into the ecology of the systems being discussed. The chapter by Edwin Pister on the recovery of the Owens Pupfish *Cyprinodon radiosus* is exemplary for this reason.

The chapters share another commonality: a shared temperance in marking each of the successes. Perhaps successes have historically not been counted in fisheries because of the need for an obvious finish to a story, but these authors are generally comfortable reframing that view. They pause, reflect on how far they have come, but then turn to the future and provide a roadmap forward.

It is this full perspective of the occupation and the potential that will make this book a welcome read for many in the profession, particularly for students of fisheries science and those early in their careers. The reader is challenged to see the career of a fisheries biologist as a “glass half full enterprise.” As a whole, the collection generates a feeling that the profession, and the people we work with, deserve the opportunity to reflect on our successes (however briefly) before the next generation carries on. As Edwin Pister states, “I wish you the very best as you take over. The future is bright.” The reader cannot help but believe.

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