

# Recap of the Vancouver Conference

American Fisheries Society - Washington-British Columbia Chapter

The Vancouver Conference, held from March 10-13, 2025, at the Pinnacle Hotel Harbourfront in Vancouver, BC, was a distinguished event featuring insightful presentations, engaging workshops and symposia, and vibrant social gatherings. Below is an overview of the key highlights from the conference.

## Opening Remarks

The conference commenced with a heartfelt Musqueam welcome delivered by Councillor Richard Sparrow. His opening remarks set a respectful and inclusive tone for the event, acknowledging the traditional territories and the importance of fisheries to the Indigenous communities.



## Plenary Speakers

We extend our gratitude to our esteemed plenary speakers for their enlightening presentations:

- Dr. Eric B. (Rick) Taylor shared groundbreaking genomic insights into the Western Char, providing new perspectives and knowledge that could transform our understanding of this species.
- Dr. Kristi Miller-Saunders explored health indices of salmon, examining the complex interplay of pathogens, stress, and disease, offering valuable insights into the challenges and management of salmon health.
- Dr. Francis Juanes captivated the audience with his research on underwater noise and its effects on marine life, shedding light on an often-overlooked aspect of marine ecology and conservation.



## Workshops

The conference featured a series of comprehensive workshops covering a wide range of topics:

- Adaptive Management
- Bull Trout Data Ontologies
- Hatchery Data
- Hatchery Genetic Plans
- PIT Tags
- Salmon Forecasting
- Transitioning to the Workforce

These sessions provided participants with hands-on experience and practical knowledge, fostering skill development and professional growth.



## Symposia

The symposia sessions were diverse and rich in content, featuring topics such as:

- Adaptive Management
- Angler Partnerships
- Cooperative Research
- Estuaries
- European Green Crab
- Fish Passage
- Forage Fish
- General Session
- General Session — Habitat
- Hatchery Evaluations
- Human Impacts
- Hydropower & Fish
- Integrated Population Models
- Management Strategies
- Native Char
- Pinniped Interactions
- PIT Tags





- Predator-Prey
- Salmon Ocean Ecology
- Salmon Prize
- Sockeye Salmon
- Sturgeon
- Thermal Refugia

Each symposium session offered in-depth discussions and presentations, contributing to a broader understanding of various aspects of fisheries science and management.



## Trade Show

The trade show featured exhibits from sponsors showcasing cutting-edge innovations and industry leaders, providing an excellent platform for attendees to explore the latest advancements in fisheries technology and products.



## Poster Sessions

The poster sessions were a key highlight, allowing researchers to share their groundbreaking work and engage with peers in vibrant discussions. These sessions were instrumental in spreading new ideas and fostering collaborations.



## Social Events

- Welcome Social: Held at the beautiful Vista 360 at the Pinnacle Hotel, the welcome social event was fantastic. With a breathtaking view of Vancouver Harbour, it set the perfect tone for engaging conversations and meaningful connections.





- **Student Mixer:** This energetic space allowed students to connect and network with peers and professionals, encouraging the next generation of fisheries scientists.
- **Grand Social Dinner:** The grand social dinner featured a variety of silent auction items, adding excitement to the evening. It was a memorable night of camaraderie and celebration.
- **5k Spawning Run and 2.5k Carcass Crawl:** The route followed the beautiful Seawall from Coal Harbour Park along the Burrard Inlet to the turnaround in Stanley Park.



## Awards

Awards were given during business meetings, recognizing outstanding contributions and achievements in the field of fisheries science. The awards presented included:

- **Worthy Coelacanth Award:** Dr. Kristi Miller-Saunders was honored with this award for her long-standing, progressive advancements in fisheries science at the genetic level.

- **Volunteer Organization Award:** The Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group received this award for exemplary contributions to fisheries conservation, education, and science.
- **Certificate of Appreciation Award:** Oceans Initiative was recognized for significant contributions to protecting salmon runs in the Pacific Northwest using Targeted Acoustic Startle Technology.
- **Certificate of Achievement Award:** Eric B. (Rick) Taylor was acknowledged for significant professional achievement while advancing and supporting fisheries science and conservation.
- **Conservation Organization of the Year:** Peninsula Streams and Shorelines was awarded for their efforts to restore key salmonid habitats on southern Vancouver Island.
- **Meritorious Service Award:** Jeff Fryer was honored for his substantial contributions to the success of the chapter, improving knowledge and membership processes.
- **Haig Brown Award:** The Pacific Salmon Foundation was recognized for effectively communicating Pacific salmon conservation efforts through various non-technical publications and outreach platforms.
- **Cederholm Scholarships:** two students were awarded scholarships for their excellence in fisheries studies.
  - Graduate Student – Claire Vaage (University of Washington)
  - Undergraduate Student – Scott Van Haren (University of Victoria)
- **Working Group Awards:**
  - Hatchery Evaluations (Leads: Brian Beckman, Hayley Nuetzel, Phil Sandstrom)
  - Pinnipeds (Lead: Kylie DaCunha)
- **Retired Jersey:** Past presidents were creatively recognized for their service and dedication!







## Citizen Science Sturgeon Trip

The conference also included an exciting citizen science sturgeon trip on the Fraser River. Participants joined local experts to learn about and contribute to sturgeon research. This hands-on experience provided invaluable insights into sturgeon habitats, population dynamics, and conservation efforts. By involving community members in scientific exploration, the trip fostered a deeper appreciation for these ancient fish and highlighted the importance of preserving their ecosystems.

