

## PROTECTED RESOURCES AND BIODIVERSITY DIVISION NEWS – APR 2006

Congratulations to Blair Mase Guthrie and Dr. Patricia Rosel who were each selected as SEFSC Employee of the Year. Both participated in the awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. on April 25. Well done!

**Blair Mase-Guthrie** coordinates the Southeast US Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Network and was recognized in the Program Employees – Management, Scientific, Technical GS 1-10 category. Blair's expertise, dedication, and abilities were demonstrated during two particularly visible stranding events in 2005. The first was a stranding of approximately 80 rough-toothed dolphins that occurred in the Florida Keys. These animals were dispersed over an extremely large area in both shallow water lagoons and on offshore sand bars. Cold water temperatures and weather conditions posed additional logistical challenges and risks to human safety. Blair arrived on scene approximately eight hours after the initial report and remained on duty in a lead role for 72 straight hours. She coordinated with personnel from Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission Law Enforcement, the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, the US Coast Guard, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and marine mammal stranding network members to ensure public and human safety, identify and conduct health assessments of individual animals, manage data collection and necropsies on dead animals, and guide rehabilitation efforts. The second major event was the rescue of eight bottlenose captive dolphins released from Mississippi Marineline in Gulfport, MS immediately following Hurricane Katrina. These animals quickly gained national and international media attention, and Ms. Mase worked with others inside and outside of NOAA fisheries to safely find and rescue these dolphins. The logistics of this event were complicated by the difficulty in communication, transport, and unsafe environmental conditions following the hurricane. This successful effort by NOAA and its partners was highlighted on every national nightly news program as a major positive story following Hurricane Katrina. These two events only highlight Ms. Mase's efforts during 2005.

**Dr. Patricia E. Rosel** was recognized for her continuing contribution to the NOAA mission of conserving marine mammal stocks in the category: Program Employees – Management, Scientific, Technical - GS 11-15. Dr. Rosel is a prolific, widely respected, and exceptional researcher with over 25 publications in peer-reviewed journals. Her research led to the successful development of management plans for marine mammals through the Take Reduction Team process and she has spearheaded improvements in genetic tools used to assess marine mammal population structure. Her achievements and expertise are recognized within NOAA fisheries and the national and international scientific community. She initiated a multinational program to collect harbor porpoise samples and lead a comprehensive analysis of harbor porpoise population structure in the Northwest Atlantic, including Atlantic Canada and Greenland. Dr. Rosel has led the SEFSC marine mammal molecular genetics program to help determine marine mammal population structure. She initiated a series of procedures to clone and develop new genetic markers for bottlenose dolphins. She also formulated a novel approach to allow examination of the presence of hybrids using AFLP technology that had not been used in cetaceans before. Patty's work in clearly delineating population structure was essential to

the development of a take reduction plan and improved conservation of Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphins.

In 2005, Dr. Rosel faced with a unique challenge following Hurricane Rita requiring adaptability and activity is well beyond her normal job duties. Several bottlenose dolphins were trapped in small shallow ditches along the coastline of Louisiana. The plight of these animals quickly attracted national media attention. Dr. Rosel lead an effort to rescue these animals in cooperation with members of the Southeast US Marine Mammal Health and Stranding response network, local law enforcement, and the U.S. Coast Guard. She was interviewed on several national news programs and presented an exceptional image of the professionalism, skill, and dedication of NOAA employees.

#### NOAA CORP OFFICERS MAKE WAVES

Congratulations to LTJG Natasha Davis. The Secretary has approved recommendation of the NOAA Officer Personnel Board to promote LTJG Natasha R. Davis to the next highest grade. Once approved by the President, and with the advice and consent of the Senate, Natasha will be promoted to LT when a vacancy occurs in that grade.

LTJG Leah Harman entered an "Adventure" short triathlon (running, mountain biking and kayaking) the first weekend in April and was the women's (and overall?) winner! Congratulations, Leah!

#### RECENT PR&BD PEER REVIEW PUBLICATIONS

Bartholomew, Aaron and **J.A. Bohnsack**. 2005. A review of catch-and-release angling mortality with implications for no-take reserves. *Rev. Fish Biology and Fisheries* 15: 129-154.

Bracht, A.J., R.L. Brudek, **RuthY. Ewing**, C.A. Manire, K.A. Burek, C.Rosa, K.B> Beckmen, J.E. Maruniak, and C.H. Romero. Genetic identification of novel poxviruses of cetaceans and pinipeds. 2006. *Arch. Virology* 151:423-438.

**Frias-Torres, Sarah**. 2006. Habitat use of juvenile goliath grouper *Epinephelus itajara* in the Florida Keys, USA. *Endangered Species Research* 1:1-6.

Lara D. Adams and **Patricia E. Rosel**. 2006. Population differentiation of the Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*) in the Western North Atlantic, including the Gulf of Mexico. *Marine Biology* 148(3): 671-681.

Vasquez-Yeomans L., **Monica Lara**, E. Sosa-Cordero, J.A. Cohuo Colli, and R. Herrera Pavon. 2005. Report on the collection of larvae of bonefish from the coast of the Mexican Caribbean. *Contributions in Marine Science* 37:101-102.

Please send any Division news or information that you would like to share to Jim Bohnsack.