

Burdick named outstanding researcher of the year

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Bob Burdick is the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's Outstanding Researcher of the Year. Bob has worked with the endangered Colorado River fishes for his entire 30-year career. After earning a graduate degree in Wildlife Science from Utah State University, Bob became one of the first biologists with the Colorado River Fishery Project (CRFP) in Vernal, Utah, where his work included surveying fish populations in 425 miles of the Green and Yampa rivers.

In 1982, Bob transferred to the Grand Junction, Colo., CRFP office where he is a senior staff fish biologist. He is actively involved with conducting and evaluating nonnative fish management actions in more than 110 miles of the Upper Colorado and Lower Gunnison rivers. Bob oversees operation of fish passages on the Colorado and Gunnison rivers. He also ensures that all station field equipment is maintained, including electrofishing boats and rafts.

"Bob's research contributions are extensive," said Pat Martinez, Colorado Division of Wildlife biologist and past researcher of the year, who presented the award at the annual Upper Basin Researchers meeting in Grand Junction in January. "Bob performed the initial evaluation to determine the feasibility of using PIT tags to mark endangered fishes, validated minimum stream flows for the Lower Gunnison River, and developed a stocking plan for razorback sucker in the Upper Colorado and Gunnison rivers. He assessed post-stocking survival and distribution for hatchery-raised razorback sucker, surveyed fish populations in the Gunnison River and conducted a floodplain and bottomlands inventory of the Upper Colorado and Gunnison rivers. He also presented and published a surgical procedure to implant fish with radio transmitters at the International Symposium on Biotelemetry.

"Bob is a gearhead, a jack-of-all trades, with the mechanical aptitude to procure, maintain and deploy equipment," Pat said. "He's the go-to guy for emergencies, repairs, spare parts, or for research."

Bob expressed deep appreciation for the award. "This award is a validation that my participation, involvement and contributions toward protecting these four big-river fishes are appreciated and have been worthwhile," he said. "I do not exactly see myself as a true researcher but more of a hip boots and waders type of biologist. When I think of the past award recipients, I am honored and extremely pleased that you believe my contributions deserve recognition along with theirs. These native fishes need devoted advocates like yourselves if they stand a chance of surviving" ◀



RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR BOB BURDICK