

# Martinez named outstanding researcher of the year

Colorado Division of Wildlife Biologist Patrick (Pat) Martinez is the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's Outstanding Researcher of the Year. Pat has made numerous important contributions to endangered fish management in the Colorado River Basin during his 23-year career as a fishery biologist and researcher with the Colorado Division of Wildlife.



KEVIN ROGERS, CO. DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR PATRICK MARTINEZ

Pat's research led to the development and use of electrofishing standards that have improved efficiency in sampling fish populations. He and his colleagues also applied stable isotope analyses to promote understanding of riverine food webs and developed microchemical techniques allowing otoliths (fish ear bones) to be used to track movements of fish among various habitats.

"Perhaps some of Pat's most significant contributions to endangered fish recovery are his efforts to evaluate and minimize the interaction of introduced game fish," said Recovery Program Director Bob Muth. "One of the Recovery Program's goals is to manage nonnative sport fish populations where they conflict with recovery. Because of the popularity of these sport fish, that goal can be controversial. Pat excels in balancing the interests of the angling public with those of the Recovery Program by taking a scientific, questioning and cooperative approach."

Pat assumed a leadership role in developing Colorado's "Procedures for Stocking Nonnative Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin," which laid the foundation for recovery of endangered fish as well as continued warmwater sportfishery management. He and his colleagues are continuing their work with fish otoliths to identify the sources of nonnative, predacious fish species in rivers of western Colorado and eastern Utah. This information will help determine the best management methods.

"Pat's ideas are always clear, innovative and forward thinking," said Kevin Bestgen, director of Colorado State University's Larval Fish Laboratory, who presented the award. "His career is defined by excellence. He is absolutely dedicated to the resource and works hard at implementing research findings. Pat is dedicated to performing the highest quality work that time, personnel, technology and scientific resources will permit."

In addition to research related to endangered fish, Pat has studied numerous other aquatic issues including lake trout ecology, kokanee and mysid shrimp interactions and coldwater reservoir ecology. He has published many peer-reviewed articles and never hesitates to share his research findings. In fact, he can often be found teaching biology students at Colorado State University in Fort Collins where he earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in fishery biology.

While Pat appreciates the recognition he has received for his work, his greatest reward will be to see native fish populations reach a point at which they no longer require state and federal protection.

"Many threatened, endangered and native fishes have few vocal fans," Pat said. "No matter. Our agency missions, supported by state and federal laws, tell us that the greater public relies on us as fishery professionals to ensure the survival of our rare and low-profile fish species. This is noble work and a fight worth winning. I am grateful to my colleagues who strive to positively influence the recovery and preservation of these vulnerable animals." ❦

*Editor's note: Pat is also the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Award of Excellence from the Colorado/Wyoming chapter of the American Fisheries Society.*