

Christopherson named outstanding researcher of the year

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) Northeastern Regional Supervisor Kevin Christopherson has been named the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's Outstanding Researcher of the Year. Kevin's 25-year career includes working with all aspects of fisheries biology including research, fish culture and hatchery operations, conservation of fish and wildlife, and fishery management.



RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR
KEVIN CHRISTOPHERSON

Kevin has made many contributions toward recovery of the endangered fishes.

"From the beginning of his involvement with the Recovery Program, Kevin brought a broad fishery perspective that has benefited program participants and the endangered fishes," said Kevin Bestgen, director of Colorado State University's Larval Fish Laboratory, who presented the award. "Kevin has always presented a reasonable and balanced viewpoint that is based in science, with the overall objective of recovering the endangered fishes."

Kevin Christopherson's lengthy career has taken him to assignments throughout Utah and Washington including work at the fisheries experiment station in Logan, as a research biologist in Cedar City, a fisheries program manager in Price, a reclamation biologist for PacifiCorp in Washington, and a stint as acting southeast regional supervisor in Price.

He spent the last eight years of his career in Vernal as the UDWR project leader for native and endangered aquatic species. During that time, he conducted several studies that address how to enhance habitats to recover endangered fishes. Most recently, Kevin documented larval transport and habitat use during high spring flows. He confirmed that larvae drift into floodplain wetlands, some as far as 54 miles from the spawning site. His research also focused on larval survival in the presence of nonnative fish in floodplain wetlands.

"These studies are right on target with the Recovery Program's mission by helping to identify the minimum amount of water necessary to recover these species," said Recovery Program Director Bob Muth. "This information will help us identify the flows necessary to move larval endangered fish into the appropriate nursery habitats."

Since becoming northeastern regional supervisor earlier this year, Kevin's responsibilities have broadened to include all of the wildlife species in northeastern Utah.

"UDWR is very committed to the conservation of all of the species of Utah, and I feel very fortunate for the opportunity to play a small role in the Endangered Fish Recovery Program," Kevin said. "The work was rewarding, but my fondest memories are of the many dedicated people who worked on this effort."

Kevin holds a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Utah and a master's degree in biology from Utah State University. ◀