Young Professional Spotlight

Young Professional members of AIFRB represent the next generation of leaders in fisheries science and management. Through *Briefs* and our social media platforms we will be highlighting our Young Professionals as a way to introduce them to the full membership and create opportunities for collaborations. AIFRB's Young Professional Representative, Connor Capizzano (connor.capizzano001@umb.edu), will be showcasing new Young Professionals throughout the year using a series of biographical interviews. This month's Young Professional Spotlight features recent W.F. Thompson student paper award winner **Lisa Chong**, **Florida District** and **Ph.D. student** at the **University of Florida** in **Gainesville, FL**.

Lisa Chong – Florida District

What is your current position, with what company/organization, and what is the focus of your research/work?
I am a PhD at University of Florida in the Fisheries Aquatic Sciences program located in Gainesville, FL. My dissertation involves creating models and quantitative tools for socioecological fisheries systems with artificial reefs with a focus on the Gulf of Mexico red snapper stock. I hope to create quantitative, interactive models that can help various stakeholders understand how artificial reefs impact fish and fisher behavior and then how their interaction influences certain fisheries outcomes.

Where did you receive your education, and what helped pave your way to your current position?
I graduated from Stony Brook University, New York in 2016 with a BS in Marine Vertebrate Biology. I then received my master's degree in Aquatic Tropical Ecology at Universität Bremen in association with the Leibniz Centre for Marine Tropical Research in 2018. My mentors during my master's studies have inspired me to pursue a PhD degree and become a quantitative fisheries scientist.

How does your work apply to, or influence, fishery management (e.g., stock assessments, sportfishing, commercial regulations, habitat protection, etc.)?
In my dissertation research, I would like to investigate how the spatial disposition of artificial reef implementation will have impacts on the overall fishery, which will involve spatial dynamics, fish population dynamics, fisher behavior, and socio-ecological interactions. This will integrate research from stock assessment, socioeconomic (e.g. recreational fisher satisfaction and utility), habitat, and ecological studies. In creating this model, we hope to develop a tool that stakeholders can use to make decisions about artificial reefs before their implementation as it is a extensive and expensive decision.

What is your professional outlook for fisheries management? In other words, what will the future of fisheries management look like 10-20 years from now. What are we doing correctly, what needs to be improved (e.g., in research, policy, education)?
The socio-economic and -ecological context and consequences need to be considered as they constrain the effectiveness of assessments and management procedures. I believe that more collaboration between state and federal jurisdictions, fishers, industry stakeholders, and scientists is

needed   in   the   stock   assessment   and   policy   development   processes.

What is the importance of young fishery professionals today and for the future of fishery management?
Young fishery professionals have adapted to advancing technology throughout their life and have access many resources available to them. Modern quantitative models and analyses tools for fisheries management are also evolving rapidly. As resources are more widely available and international collaborations are more possible, young fishery professionals can help solve worldwide fisheries and climate change issues and continue to push the field forward.

What drew you to AIFRB, and what does AIFRB do for you and what can it do for other young professionals in this field?
I heard of AIFRB on Twitter and through applying for the W.F. Thompson Award. I wanted to be more involved in communities of fisheries researchers like AIFRB to grow my connections and take advantage of the resources provided. AIFRB provides networking opportunities for young professionals in the fisheries field throughout the country, which is important for possible future collaborations.

Please contact Lisa (lisa.chong8594@gmail.com) to continue the conversation!