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PROFILES IN CANADIAN AQUACULTURE



Bulletin

de l'Association aquacole du Canada

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ISSN 0840-5417

Conception et mise en page: Capamara Communications Inc.
Imprimé par Rhino Print, Vancouver, BC

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The *Bulletin* is available through subscription (\$60 per year) or as a benefit of membership in the Aquaculture Association of Canada, a nonprofit charitable organization.

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St. Andrews, N.B., Canada E5B 3T6

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Annual dues are \$100 for individuals (\$50 for students and seniors) and \$300 for organizations. The *Bulletin* is indexed in Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) and the Zoological Record. Mailed under Canada Post Publications Mail Commercial Sales Agreement No. 40065445

ISSN 0840-5417

Design and layout: Capamara Communications Inc.
Printed by Rhino Print, Vancouver, BC

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Cover: AAC Photo Contest Winner: Marine Harvest Canada

PROFILES IN CANADIAN AQUACULTURE

The Aquaculture Association of Canada (AAC) has been an important part of the Canadian aquaculture landscape for the past 30 years. The AAC is uniquely Canadian consisting of members from industry, industry associations, academia, and federal and provincial governments. As part of the 30th anniversary celebration, the AAC is acknowledging in this publication the talented and hard working people of Canadian aquaculture.

The Canadian aquaculture industry is a highly diverse and exciting sector. We grow many different species of freshwater and saltwater finfish in addition to marine plants and invertebrates. The conditions, methods of culture, regulations, research requirements, and social acceptance all vary from one region to another and from species to species. The people who work in the aquaculture industry and collaborate with the industry are equally diverse providing a broad array of expertise, talent and ingenuity; many dedicating their careers and sometimes their personal lives to Canadian aquaculture. Being proud of this diversity spawned (pardon the pun) the idea to document personal stories and celebrate our industry. Thus the year long road to this publication, *Profiles in Canadian Aquaculture*, was started.

The profiles presented in this publication describe personal paths within the aquaculture industry – the successes, joyful events, humorous situations, and for some of us the serendipitous moments that brought us to this industry in the first place. These stories describe individual dedication to the industry and a belief in the future of Canadian aquaculture. We are deeply grateful to the authors for sharing their aquaculture stories and thoughts.

Our sincere thanks to Morgan Townsend whose exceptional writing and editing skills were invaluable.

And thanks to all of you who have contributed to making Canadian aquaculture a viable and thriving industry.

Linda D. Hiemstra, Joy Wade

Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided financial support for this publication through the Aquaculture Collaborative Research and Development Program (ACRDP).

CONTENTS

PROFILES

Mary Ellen Walling	3
Jeff Eastman	4
Fernando Salazar	7
Linda Hiemstra	10
Henrik Kreiberg	12
Thierry Chopin	14
Pamela Parker.....	17
Lawrence J. Albright.....	18
Chris Pearce	20
Matthew and Joanne Liutkus	22
Thomas George	25
Steve Neil.....	26
Bill Pennell.....	28
Timothy DeJager.....	31
Stephen F. Cross.....	32
Shelley King.....	35
Tillmann Benfey.....	36
Leslie-Anne Davidson	38
Myron Roth	40
Andrew Boghen	43
René E. Lavoie	45
Helen Gurney-Smith.....	47
Shawn Robinson	48
Steve Leadbeater.....	50
Julian Hynes.....	52
Danny Boyce.....	54
Chris Hendry	56
Neil Bourne	58
Brad Hicks	60
Ward Griffioen	62
Dave Conley	64
Céline Audet	66
Terry Brooks.....	68
Craig Clarke.....	70
Profiles of Fisheries and Oceans Canada	
Aquaculture Facilities	72

Shawn Robinson

AAC Member Since 1996

Affiliations with AAC

President 2002-2003

Treasurer 1997-2001

Director 1996-2004

HISTORY

I started my career in marine biology at Acadia University in 1976 where I quickly developed a taste for sub-tidal marine ecology and the practical applications of this knowledge. Summers were spent working for the Prince Edward Island Dept. of Fisheries on fishing boats around the province or for the National Research Council in Halifax doing SCUBA-based seaweed surveys of Irish moss off the north shore of PEI.

After finishing my B.Sc. honors degree with Dr. Sherman Bleakney on the ecology of intertidal invertebrate fauna near Cape Blomidon in Minas Basin, I was convinced by some of my mentors, such as Dr. Dan Toews, that it would be a good idea to continue my studies on the west coast of Canada for a change of scenery as well as experiencing some new ideas. As a result, I spent three rewarding years diving on the west coast of Vancouver Island studying growth rates of the giant Pacific octopus under the tutelage of Dr. Brian Hartwick from Simon Fraser University. Working with fellow graduate student David Fyfe from Montréal, and based out of the quaint little town of Tofino, we were turned loose to pursue science, higher knowledge and hopefully generate a Master's degree in the process.

Those were heady days and we learned a lot about the practicalities of working in the field in remote locations and the importance of seeing things first hand. Ask me sometime about living in a de-commissioned chicken coop. My M.Sc. work led me to the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo where I had the distinct pleasure of working with Drs. Norm Sloan and Glenn Jamieson on projects involving geoducks, sea stars, sea urchins, king crabs, snow crabs, and large offshore squid while working



off a multitude of platforms such as zodiacs, Boston Whalers, three-man submarines, large survey vessels like the GB Reid and offshore tuna boats. Two years flew by and I got to work with many talented colleagues on a vast array of interesting projects.

This brief respite in the working world allowed me to replenish my fiscal coffers that had become depleted after my Masters and it also introduced me to two more mentors who would become my main supervisors for my PhD work, Drs. Tim Parsons from the University of British Columbia and Dan Ware from the Pacific Biological Station. I spent the next 4 years happily bobbing away on small vessels in the Strait of Georgia studying biological oceanography on the early life history ecology of Pacific herring.

As per usual, one thing inevitably led to another and after my PhD, I followed other colleagues of mine back to the East Coast where I accepted a job at the St. Andrews Biological Station with the Canadian Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans in 1988 where I have remained ensconced ever since. Belonging to the group of the increasingly rare species of “working invertebrate scientists”, my research species have revolved around softshell clams, sea scallops, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, blue mussels, salmon, periwinkles, sea stars, polychaete worms, copepods parasites such as sea lice and even bacteria and viruses.

"I have been able to indulge my passion for music by playing in a band called Homemade Bread for the last 15 years."

All of these projects on the various species have involved the underlying theme of understanding the ecological dynamics of the populations in relation to the human exploitation of these resources. A current example of this is the development of the integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA) concept where various organisms are grown together in culture taking into account their position in the food web and mimicking natural



AC04 with Sharon McGladdery

ecosystems. Developing more sustainable practices for food production from the sea has become a passion of mine. All of the above work has been done in conjunction with a cast of talented scientists, biologists, technicians, managers, graduate students interns and ever present marine industry members.

However, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" and living in St. Andrews has allowed me time for raising a family with my wife and muse, Lesa Pomeroy, and recreational activities such as golfing, hockey, tennis, squash and the odd bit of hiking. For the artistic side, I have been able to indulge my passion for music by playing in a band called Homemade Bread for the last 15 years. The band plays a combination of traditional



Judging the Student Idol Contest AC07

Maritime, Irish, Newfoundland and popular folk music at various events in and around the St. Andrews area. It is a lot of fun and we get to meet a wide array of people from all walks of life.

VALUE OF THE AAC AND AQUACULTURE CANADA MEETINGS

One of my professional involvements has been with the Aquaculture Association of Canada as both a member and an executive. Like most people on the board, I was convinced to join and contribute, but once I was involved, I quickly saw the value of such an institution.

Foods from aquatic systems are following the same trends as food from the land and there is no doubt in my mind that we will be culturing more from our oceans and fresh waters on all three coasts. There is no other alternative with our increasing population numbers. Despite our current recession in aquaculture development in Canada, our future in the oceans will rely on culture, either intensive or extensive.

The AAC will have a role in helping to shape that development, as it has been doing over the decades. It provides an unbiased forum for national discussions, it allows for the development and networking of students that will provide the next generation of aquaculturists and it allows for the planning of "blue sky" research that will lead Canada into the more sustainable production of food and other aquatic products in the future. I am proud to be associated with such an organization.

Shawn MC Robinson, Ph.D.

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