



Great Lakes Fishery Commission

ESTABLISHED BY CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES TO IMPROVE AND PERPETUATE FISHERY RESOURCES

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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION HONORS DR. JIM BENCE OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY FOR DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Bence, of East Lansing, Michigan, is recognized for his work on large-scale research projects to understand food-web and population dynamics in each of the Great Lakes

ANN ARBOR, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission last week presented Dr. Jim Bence, a Professor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and Co-Director of the Quantitative Fisheries Center at Michigan State University, with the 2012 Jack Christie/Ken Loftus Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions toward Understanding Healthy Great Lakes Ecosystems.

The Jack Christie/Ken Loftus Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions toward Understanding Healthy Great Lakes Ecosystems recognizes individuals or groups who adhere to the highest principles of science, for the benefit of Great Lakes ecosystems and the fisheries they support. Dr. Bence's work is wide-ranging and embodies the spirit of Jack Christie and Ken Loftus directly by helping fishery agencies manage Great Lakes fish populations. Dr. Bence has made distinguished contributions in many areas including stock assessment methodologies, bioenergetics, policy analyses, population and community dynamics, modeling, and many more.

“Dr. Bence's notable achievements are numerous,” said Commissioner Dr. Bill Taylor, a University Distinguished Professor at Michigan State University. “He helped develop and lead food-web studies to understand the linkages between prey fish populations and predator demand on lakes Michigan, Huron, and Ontario. This work has contributed directly to the critical stocking decisions fishery managers and stakeholders have made in previous months and years.”

Taylor continued: “Dr. Bence developed the first statistical catch-at-age models in the Great Lakes – a tool that is now routinely used to estimate population abundance and mortality of lake trout, lake whitefish, walleye, and yellow perch, and to project biological-based harvest limits in all five of the Great Lakes. He has conducted numerous analyses and published several papers on the effects of sea lamprey on fish populations, including the development of economic injury levels for management of sea lamprey populations in the Great Lakes. And he has played an instrumental role in developing statistical catch-at-age models of lake trout and lake whitefish in the 1836 treaty-ceded-waters, which are now accepted as the standard for projecting harvest limits and allocating fishery yields.”

Taylor continued: “In addition to his scientific contributions, Dr. Bence is also a recognized mentor and leader in fisheries research and education. A professor at Michigan State University, Dr. Bence teaches courses, advises students, and leads numerous research projects. As Co-Director of the Quantitative Fisheries Center, he helps build capacity within fishery management agencies in quantitative methods; improves quantitative methods for assessing fish stocks; assists agencies in using model-based

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approaches in decision making; and, develops a better understanding of fish community and population dynamics.”

Taylor concluded: “Dr. Bence is truly a respected contributor to the understanding of healthy Great Lakes ecosystems. The commission admires his work and appreciates all he has done to increase understanding of fisheries and to improve policies to guide sound management.”

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The commission has the responsibility to support fisheries research, control the invasive sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, and facilitate implementation of A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, a provincial, state, and tribal fisheries management agreement.



Commissioner Dr. Bill Taylor (right) presents Dr. Jim Bence with the Jack Christie/Ken Loftus Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions toward Understanding Healthy Great Lakes Ecosystems. The award was presented to Dr. Bence on June 6, 2012, during the Great Lakes Fishery Commission’s annual meeting, held in Buffalo, NY. Photo: T. Lawrence.