

Nomination for 2019 FL AFS – Rich Cailteux Award – Dr. Richard “Ed” Matheson Jr.

Ed received his Master of Arts from College of William & Mary, Biology Department and his PhD from Texas A&M University in the Wildlife and Fisheries Department. This background provided a solid basis for a career focused on the systematics and ecology of fishes across multiple habitats ranging from freshwater streams to the deep sea. Ed has been a research scientist at the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) since 1987. Over the years, his research interests have included seagrass-associated fishes, fishes of tidal-river estuaries and more recently, fishes of the West Florida Shelf. Between 1987-1991 Ed designed and coordinated the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) study which assessed the effects of minimum flows on the fish communities of the Little Manatee River. The success and scientific results of this CZM program led to over three dozen additional collaborative efforts, and over \$3 million in grants between the SW Florida water management district and FWRI. Since the early 1990's, he has also been involved in various projects documenting differences in fish community structure in Florida Bay in relation to freshwater flow, seagrass die-offs, and Everglades restoration. He has served as the chief ichthyologist for the Fisheries-Independent Monitoring (FIM) subsection where his knowledge of Florida's fishes guides young and seasoned scientists across the state and ensures the quality of these data used to manage key species. Ed's accurate identification of collected specimens aid in evaluating changes in native fish distribution within Florida's waters, document occurrence of introduced or exotic species within freshwater or estuarine systems and has become increasingly important as range shifts occur in concert with climate change. Ed consistently provides critical insight and constructive support for many studies within his agency as well as with groups from other agencies or academia. His depth of knowledge of fish biology, taxonomy, systematics, community structure along with habitat complexities and how fish fit into differing ecosystems (including those beyond Florida) is unmatched within the agency. Ed provides 'big-picture' thinking to how FWRI approaches our fisheries research objectives and how best to apply the discoveries we find in our data.

Ed has authored or coauthored over 30 peer reviewed papers. He has served as an adjunct faculty member and graduate committee member at the University of South Florida, Marine Science Department as well as a graduate committee member for the University of Central Florida. He is a member of the American Fisheries Society and joined the Florida Chapter in 1987. During his career Ed has presented at over 50 scientific meetings, including the FL Chapter AFS. He has also served as a FL AFS judge (talks/posters) upon numerous occasions. Ed has served as a reviewer for many regional, national and international scientific journals including Bulletin of Marine Science, Estuaries, Southwestern Naturalist, and Fishery Bulletin.

On a personal level, Ed is one of the most approachable scientists at FWRI. He routinely takes time out of his day to mentor young scientists in fish identification, literature review, manuscript preparation, and just in life as a fisheries biologist. His sense of humor, pleasant demeanor, and professional expertise have led to many cooperative research efforts and made him an invaluable asset to FWC over his career. Not only does Ed exemplify dedication and service to the protection and preservation of Florida's fish species, he has been instrumental in identifying them accurately for research and outreach purposes and to train younger staff to uphold these scientific pursuits. One colleague wrote, "He is truly a Tennessee gentleman, one whose mild mannerism yet decisiveness in matters of science make him a delight to work with." Florida Chapter "Royalty" and past president, Ron Taylor reflects first meeting Ed at the FL AFS meeting in 1987 on Big Pine Key. Ron said that since that day, Ed has contributed an unsurpassed store of knowledge not only on YOY fishes but biological processes in general. On a side note, Ed was the inspiration the inaugural Lampshade "Get Small" Award"!!