
Midwestern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
2010 Awards Nominations Form

Award (check only one per form)

☐

Spirit of the Shack

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Fisheries Biologist of the Year

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Wildlife Biologist of the Year

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Information from person making the nomination:

Name: Dr. Jennifer Hauxwell

Organization: Wisconsin DNR

Title: Chief, Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences Research program

E-mail: Jennifer.Hauxwell@wis.gov

Phone number: (608) 221-6373

Person nominated for award:

Name: Dr. John Lyons

Organization: Wisconsin DNR

Title: Fisheries Research Scientist

1. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual meets the criteria for the award:

Please see attached page.

2. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.

Please see attached page listing selected publications and recent presentations. These lists indicate the breadth of John's fisheries contributions both academically and with application toward fisheries management and resource protection.

1. Since joining the WDNR Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Research Program in 1996, Dr. John Lyons has consistently served on behalf of fisheries resources by providing sound science upon which to make natural resource management decisions. Simply stated, John is not only brilliant as a researcher... he is also effective, efficient, and dedicated toward implementing the results of his research. He serves a critical need for aquatic technical expertise for multiple Divisions within our agency including the Fisheries Management, Watershed Management, and Endangered Resources programs. In addition to leading the taxonomic and ecological effort to update Becker's encyclopedic reference to *Fishes of Wisconsin*, John has published over 100 scientific journal articles in the peer-reviewed literature with 45 of them as first author - an amazing feat for any scientist! In addition, he has written numerous technical and nontechnical reports to reach multiple audiences, including academic researchers, biologists, policy-makers, and the general public. In addition to establishing a highly respected research program (both nationally and internationally), John serves the mission of the WDNR through his countless contributions via teams, committees, and informal means of communication (daily phone calls, emails, meetings, etc.) (please see attached list of additional contributions). John's findings largely guide many of the statewide monitoring guidelines in place today as well as statewide best management practices on land to ameliorate impacts to aquatic systems. He has recently served as a leader among multiple stakeholders including WDNR, USFWS, River Alliance, and Alliant Energy in planning to design, implement, and evaluate fish passage facilities at the Prairie du Sac Dam on the Wisconsin River (an unprecedented undertaking in fish passage technology for the Midwestern United States), while dealing with the challenges associated with preventing the spread of invasive species (see attached link to recent seminar: <http://intranet.dnr.state.wi.us/int/es/science/pdf/seminar20100225.pdf>). In addition, he provides leadership in understanding the effects of emerging climate change impacts on Wisconsin's coldwater fisheries statewide. We are so fortunate to have someone so gifted and so highly productive working on behalf of aquatic resources in the Midwest. Interestingly, John shares his passion for using fisheries research to guide effective management in Mexico on an annual basis during his "vacations" – John characterizes this trip as an opportunity for him to learn more about fish as well as to contribute his skills in a part of the world that lacks the considerable resources of the U.S. For all of the reasons above, and so many more that do not fit on 1 page, please consider John for the Fisheries Biologist of the Year Award.

An interesting addendum – how many anglers in the world could boast catching 50 species of fish by hook and line in 1 year in Wisconsin waters? To the best of our knowledge, only John...
<http://www.jsonline.com/sports/outdoors/92378314.html>

Additional contributions:

- Research leader on 7 fisheries research projects of statewide and regional significance
- Responds to multiple daily requests from WDNR managers, biologists and administrators; other governmental agencies, universities, environmental consultants, and non-profit organizations inside and outside the U.S., and the general public for identification of unknown fish specimens, use of photos of specific fish species, and provision of diverse information on aquatic ecology and fish biology. Provides training, make presentations and gives interviews, and writes popular and technical articles.
- Collects data and tracks the status of all rare fishes in the state, and provides information and guidance to appropriate WDNR programs for conservation purposes.
- Collects data and tracks the status of all known and potential exotic fishes in the state and provides information and guidance to appropriate WDNR programs to assess threat and evaluate potential control options.
- Developed and helped implement new and powerful tools for monitoring and assessing stream, river, and lake ecosystems, including habitat assessment, fish surveys, and bioindicators such as the Index of Biotic Integrity

- Served as the Wisconsin representative on the American Fisheries Society's endangered fishes committee, which documents and publicizes the status of all rare fishes in North America
- Served on Fisheries Management Smallmouth Bass team, Baseline Monitoring Streams team, DNR Climate Change Team, WICCI Coldwater Fisheries Working Group
- Provides annual information on the status and trends of fisheries and fish communities in 13 different streams, rivers and lakes throughout the state
- **additional information available upon request.**

2. John Lyon's selected publications and recent presentations (additional information available on request):

Selected publications (out of >100 research publications, with 45 as first author; does not include multiple popular articles and government technical reports)

- Lyons, J., T. Zorn, J. Stewart, P. Seelbach, K. Wehrly, and L. Wang. 2009. Defining and characterizing coolwater streams and their fish assemblages in Michigan and Wisconsin, USA. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 29:1130-1151.
- Lyons, J. 2006. A fish-based index of biotic integrity to assess intermittent headwater streams in Wisconsin, USA. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 122:239-258.
- Lyons, J., P. Hanson, and E. White. 2006. A photo-based computer system for identifying Wisconsin fishes. *Fisheries* 31(6):269-275.
- Lyons, J., and P. Kanehl. 2002. Seasonal movements of smallmouth bass in streams. Pages 149-160 in M. Ridgway and D. P. Philipp, editors. *Black bass: ecology, conservation, and management*. American Fisheries Society Symposium Number 31, Bethesda, Maryland.
- Lyons, J., R. R. Piette, and K. W. Niermeyer. 2001. Development, validation, and application of a fish-based index of biotic integrity for Wisconsin's large warmwater rivers. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 130:1077-1094.
- Lyons, J., P. A. Cochran, and D. Fago. 2000. *Wisconsin fishes 2000. Status and distribution*. University of Wisconsin Sea Grant, Madison.
- Lyons, J., S. W. Trimble, and L. K. Paine. 2000. Grass versus trees: managing riparian areas to benefit streams of central North America. *Journal of the American Water Resources Association* 36:919-930.
- Lyons, J., B. M. Weigel, L. K. Paine, and D. J. Undersander. 2000. Influence of intensive rotational grazing on bank erosion, fish habitat quality, and fish communities in southwestern Wisconsin trout streams. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 55:271-276.
- Lyons, J. 1996. Patterns in the composition of fish assemblages among Wisconsin streams. *Environmental Biology of Fishes* 45:329-341.
- Lyons, J., L. Wang, and T. D. Simonson. 1996. Development and validation of an index of biotic integrity for coldwater streams in Wisconsin. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 16:241-256.
- Lyons, J. 1992. The length of stream to sample with a towed electrofishing unit when fish species richness is estimated. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 12:198-203.
- Lyons, J. 1992. Using the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) to measure environmental quality in warmwater streams of Wisconsin. U.S. Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station, St. Paul, Minnesota, General Technical Report No. 149.
- Lyons, J., and J. J. Magnuson. 1987. Effects of walleye predation on the population dynamics of small littoral-zone fishes in a northern Wisconsin lake. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 116:29-39.
- Lyons, J. 1987. Prey choice among piscivorous juvenile walleyes (*Stizostedion vitreum*). *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 44:758-764.

Recent Presentations:

- Lyons, J. 2009. The fishes of the Mukwonago River. Presentation given to the Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter of the North American Native Fishes Association, July 18, 2009, Mukwonago, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Identification of non-game fishes in northern Wisconsin streams and rivers. Training course given to WDNR fisheries biologists and technicians, June 17-18, 2009, Ladysmith, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Identification of non-game fishes in southern Wisconsin streams and rivers. Training course given to WDNR fisheries biologists and technicians, June 10-11, 2009, Prairie du Sac and Mineral Point, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Application of a fish IBI to assess the Upper Mississippi River and Wisconsin's large rivers. Meeting on the Ecological Assessment of the Upper Mississippi River, May 5-7, 2009, Dubuque, IA.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Using fish assemblages to assess the ecological health of the Upper Mississippi River. Invited plenary presentation, Annual Meeting of the Mississippi River Research Consortium, April 30-May 1, 2009, Lacrosse, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Effects of climate change on Wisconsin's fishes. Seminar presented to the UW-Madison Center for Climate Change, April 24, 2009, Madison, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Evaluation of fish passage at the Prairie du Sac Dam, Wisconsin River. Science Services Open House, April 28, 2009, Madison, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Effects of climate change on Wisconsin's coolwater and warmwater fishes. Presentation in UW-Madison's "Bracing for Impact: Climate change in Wisconsin" series, February 26, 2009, Madison, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. The diversity of Wisconsin's fishes: Past, present, and future. Lecture in University of Wisconsin class "Ecology of Fishes", March 3, 2009, Madison, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. A statewide model to predict the effects of land use and climate change on stream fishes in Wisconsin. Seminar present to WDNR Bureau of Fisheries Management, March 5, 2009, Madison, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. WDNR Baseline Monitoring. Comparisons between FM and WT. Presentation at the WDNR Bureau of Watershed Management Annual Statewide Training Conference, February 17-18, 2009, Tomahawk, WI.
- Lyons, J. 2009. Assessing smallmouth bass in non-wadeable rivers. Presentation at the WDNR Bureau of Fisheries Management Annual Statewide Training Conference, January 21-22, Wisconsin Dells, WI.

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Information from person making the nomination:

Name: Douglas A. Reeves & Russ Mason

Organization: Michigan Department of Natural Resources and
Environment

Title: Assistant Chief/Chief Wildlife Division

E-mail: Reevesd@michigan.gov/masonr2@michigan.gov

Phone number: 517-373-9311

Person nominated for award:

Name: John Niewoonder

Organization: Michigan Department of Natural Resources and
Environment

Title: Wildlife Habitat Biologist

1. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual meets the criteria for the award:
2. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.

We recommend John Niewoonder for the MAFWA Wildlife Biologist of the Year award. John is the epitome of what a field biologist should be and more; he is an emerging leader within the Wildlife Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

John Niewoonder is the Wildlife Habitat Biologist for three counties in Central Michigan. His area includes “northern forest” habitat types (aspen, cedar, pine) and “southern agricultural” areas (row crops, hay fields, riparian forests, woodlots). As a result, he manages a diverse landscape in which public desires vary considerably with regard to wildlife. John has embraced the Great Lakes Woodcock Initiative and is managing aspen and alder to provide habitat for woodcock, golden-winged warblers, and the other species that occupy such habitats. In addition, John manages oak opening habitats to encourage blue lupine for the endangered Karner blue butterfly.

For the past eighteen months, in addition to his regular duties, John has worked on a special assignment that involved preparation of Michigan Deer Management Plan. As a leader in this strategic process, John prepared background information on issues, made presentations to the Deer Advisory Team, authored the plan, hosted public meetings in which he discussed the draft plan, incorporated public comments into the final draft of the plan, and made a presentation to the Natural Resources Commission and Director Humphries summarizing the plan at a Commission meeting. His efforts culminated in adoption of the Michigan Deer Management Plan by the Director at the May meeting of the Natural Resources Commission. Even though preparing the deer plan meant long hours, and many nights away from home, John continued to coach his children’s baseball and basketball teams and took them hunting and fishing whenever possible.

John represented Wildlife Division on the Departmental team that revamped policies and procedures for timber sales. As a result, he is called on by Wildlife Division personnel across southern Lower Michigan when they have questions about conducting timber sales to get habitat work done. Mr. Niewoonder also mentors the newer biologists in the South-Central Management Unit, assisting them when they have questions as they start habitat management planning and field implementation. His familiarity with habitat management techniques and extensive experience with the policies and procedures needed to get them done make him the “go to” person in the management unit for those who need information to make their habitat plans reality.

John works extensively with non-governmental organizations in his area, including the local chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Quality Deer Management Association, and Pheasants Forever. He encourages youth participation in outdoor activities with those groups, works with deer management cooperatives, and advises private landowners on wildlife management and damage control.

Midwestern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Law Enforcement Officer of the Year 2010

Nominee: Fish and Wildlife Officer Darren Unreiner, Brooks, Alberta

Nominated by Kim McAdam, Acting Head, Field Logistics Section, on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Kim.McAdam@gov.ab.ca

780-422-1369

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to your call for nominations for the MAFWA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

The eligibility requirements for nominees for this award reinforce our decision to select Darren Unreiner as the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officer of the Year as well as this nomination for the MAFWA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award.

Although a challenging economic environment may have an impact on some segments of the public service, Darren's passion for the job and his dedication to protecting the natural resources of this province remain intact. His commitment, ingenuity and contribution to resource protection have brought credit to the Fish and Wildlife Division in his community and across the province.

Darren's contributions to conservation law enforcement over the course of his 11-year career have been exemplary. Over the last two years, Darren and his partner Doug Rutherford delivered on an ambitious operational plan to address serious fishery violations at Crawling Valley and Lake Newell. Darren led the way by developing the operational plan, securing specialized equipment and coordinating staff resources. Over the course of the two-year project, more than 300 fishery violations were detected. Darren pushed the project one step further by convincing local judges, prosecutors and fishery biologists that voluntary penalties for over-limits were not a meaningful deterrent and that individuals found committing serious offences should be sent to court. Officer Unreiner prepared comprehensive disclosure packages that included impact statements from fisheries biologists. Deterrent fines are now common in Brooks Provincial Court and often range into the thousands of dollars. Along with several other fishery compliance initiatives, Officer Unreiner has been involved in a number of important and complex wildlife investigations.

An exceptional officer is not gauged simply by the number of violators he or she sends to court, but by the impact their work has on long-term

resource protection. Darren's actions have had a positive influence on his community and his community's attitude towards the province's wildlife and fishery resources. Darren has implemented fishing education programs at local Hutterite Colonies and conducted numerous talks for schools, cub groups and other community groups. He never hesitates to offer his assistance whenever it is needed.

For example, Officer Unreiner's character was put to the test during a rescue operation on Lake Newell in the fall of 2008 when a pleasure craft with several people on board capsized as a result of severe weather conditions. Darren and two other first responders attended the scene and, despite the conditions, began a search for the overturned vessel. Shortly after locating their target, Unreiner's patrol boat was also swamped in the high waves. Placing his own safety at risk, Darren managed to recover and hold on to two young children for hours in cold and rough water until an air ambulance discovered their position and another boat was sent out to retrieve them. Although Darren's actions were responsible for saving the lives of the two children in his custody, sadly, the life of another child was lost as a result of the incident. Darren has dismissed all attempts to acknowledge his heroic conduct that night, claiming that he was only doing his job and that he would do it again if it was required of him.

Since his first days as a Fish and Wildlife officer recruit stationed in Peace River, Darren has demonstrated the commitment and passion we seek in our officers. For this reason, I feel he would be an excellent candidate for the MAWFA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award.

Kim McAdam

Acting Head, Field Logistics Section

Enforcement-Field Services Branch

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Information from person making the nomination:

Name: Kirk Nelson

Organization: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Title: Assistant Director

E-mail: kirk.nelson@nebraska.gov

Phone number: 402-471-5539

Person nominated for award:

Name: Rex Amack

Organization: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Title: Director

For over 40 years Rex Amack has served the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in numerous capacities cumulating with a soon to be 24 year period as Director. His qualifications are as unique as is his style of management and his conservation accomplishments for fish, wildlife and the parklands of Nebraska and the nation.

Rex is a journalist and media specialist by training which prepared him for his life's work of promoting outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation education. His early successes in Nebraska involved the production of the agencies nationally recognized outdoor magazine called, "NEBRASKAland". He championed the concept of "Know Nebraska Tours" which involved the interactive outdoor education of Nebraskans in fishing, hunting and parkland experiences in the mid 1970s as well as the creation of the state's first award winning recreation television show named, "Outdoor Nebraska", which he hosted, were well ahead of their time.

In the late 1980s, as Director, his abilities and skills working with diverse groups of people brought about the completion of the nationally recognized "Platte River Park/Resort Complex" known as Eugene T. Mahoney State Park which was constructed with mostly private funds totaling over \$30 million. His accomplishments raising private funds for public conservation projects is surpassed only by his ability to work with Nebraska's politicians creating and passing legislation benefiting Nebraska's natural resources. He created the "First of State" waterfowl stamp with Nebraska's own federal

waterfowl stamp artist, Neil Anderson, with all proceeds going to the preservation and restoration of Nebraska's Rainwater Basin wetlands.

Rex's involvement in national conservation issues has been significant such as Senator Reid's bill of 2005 reaffirming states rights to regulate wildlife within their borders, an effort Rex was able to convince Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson to support. Nebraska has benefited immensely from the addition of a new Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit that Rex was able to finally get Congressional approval after 15 years of effort. His work to garner Congressional support for the Teaming With Wildlife initiative helped the CARA legislation finally achieve a status of funding that continues today. Rex has worked very effectively with former Nebraska Governor and former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and current U.S. Senator Mike Johanns on federal Farm Bill issues which provide multiple benefits nationally for fish and wildlife conservation.

During his 2008/09 term as president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Rex had several noteworthy accomplishments. The formation of the new Industry/Agency partnership called the Council for the Advancement of Hunting and Shooting Sports was a major feat for the marketing and promotion of the hunting and shooting sports. Under Rex's leadership, the Executive Committee met with President Obama's natural resources transition team in December, 2008 to present the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' priorities for the incoming Administration. The Association under his leadership also developed and delivered a 37-page report "A National Fish & Wildlife Agenda: Furthering Conservation in the Public Trust," which summarized the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' conservation priorities and were amplified in policy analysis white papers. Under Rex's leadership, the Association reduced the financial burden on member agencies by eliminating both the Special Assessment and the Farm Bill Assessment that states were paying. The Association also began the process of modernizing the website and making it a more usable tool for committees and AFWA members.

Rex is currently reorganizing the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for the twenty first century using the central theme of recruiting and retaining anglers, hunters and park users. He has overseen the creation of a 20-year plan to Recruit, Develop and Retain(RDR plan) to teach kids and their families how to enjoy the outdoors. Outdoor Education may very well be his legacy after 44 years of service to Nebraska and our nation's natural resources.

Following is a list of recent positions and committees on which Rex has worked.

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

President and Vice President
Executive Committee, Chair & Vice Chair
Teaming with Wildlife Committee
Audit Committee, Vice Chair
Education and Outreach Committee
Fish and Wildlife Trust Committee

National Grants Committee
Automated Wildlife Data Systems Task Force
National Conservation Leadership Institute Advisory Group

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Executive Committee
Audit Committee, Chair
Nominating, Time and Place Committee, Chair
Director's ESA/SARA Working Group

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

President, 2006
Executive Committee
Investments Committee
National Conservation Needs Committee
Conservation Fund Board

Awards, Recognition and Positions of Leadership

Sportsman of the Year, 2009, Nebraska Wildlife Protectors
White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy, Organizer
President and Vice President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies