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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION HONORS DR. BRAD YOUNG OF THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SEA LAMPREY CONTROL

ANN ARBOR, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission presented Dr. Brad Young of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the 2013 the Vernon Applegate Award for Outstanding Contributions to sea lamprey control. Dr. Young was presented this award for his work in both the Lake Champlain and Great Lakes regions, the two regions where sea lampreys are abundant, invasive, destructive and, thanks to professionals like Dr. Young, controlled successfully.

Sea lampreys are not native to Lake Champlain or the Great Lakes. They attack a variety of fish species including trout, salmon, walleye, whitefish, and perch. Each lamprey can destroy up to 40 pounds of fish. Without control, sea lampreys decimate fisheries and thwart self-sustainability. Fortunately, sea lampreys can be controlled through several techniques including lampricides, barriers, and traps. The use of pheromones (natural attractants that lampreys emit) to manipulate sea lamprey behavior is also in development as a control technique. The Vern Applegate award is named after the lead scientist in the 1940s and 1950s who led the charge to understand the sea lamprey's life cycle and to find solutions to the Great Lakes invasion.

Dr. Young is a fishery biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Essex Junction, Vermont. Prior to holding that position, he was a post-doctoral fellow with Michigan State University, working out of the Hammond Bay Biological Station, the lead station in the Great Lakes region conducting sea lamprey research. Dr. Young, thus, has made distinguished contributions to sea lamprey control in both the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain regions. He is also the first recipient of this award by someone outside of the Great Lakes basin.

Dr. Young was nominated for the Applegate award by an individual from the Lake Champlain region who wrote, "Dr. Young's dedication to sea lamprey control on Lake Champlain has led to a level of leadership on the issue not been seen before in this region. This leadership has led to a better understanding of the importance of lamprey control by the public and state and local governments."

In presenting the award, Robert Lambe, the commission's vice-chair (and now executive secretary), said: "Like the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain has a terrible sea lamprey problem. Dr. Young was tapped to come to that region from the Great Lakes to help tackle the sea lamprey infestation there. By all accounts, he has been an integral leader in sea lamprey control and the restoration of the Lake Champlain fisheries. In fact, he has earned the strong respect of those in the basin who depend on a healthy and vibrant fishery."

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Lambe continued: “Dr. Young takes an holistic approach to sea lamprey control, applying his knowledge and the tools available to attack sea lampreys aggressively. He uses the best science available and manages a top-notch staff such that Lake Champlain has seen marked declines in sea lamprey abundances.”

The commission also noted his considerable skill interacting with the public—always a critical component of fishery management. Said Lambe: “The Lake Champlain sea lamprey control program, which is far newer than the Great Lakes program, still has some skeptics. Dr. Young has worked hard to expand and strengthen relationships with stakeholders and partners, including state agencies and non-profit organizations, to inform them about the need for and success of sea lamprey control in Lake Champlain. Indeed, much like Vernon Applegate who, in the 1950s, first had to educate people about the need for sea lamprey control, Dr. Young understands that personal contacts and good relationships are essential to success.”

Sea lamprey populations in Lake Champlain have decreased significantly in the past few decades, meeting and exceeding wounding rate goals for lake trout and Atlantic salmon. Lambe concluded: “It is because of Brad’s diligence, leadership, and strategic persistence that the people of the Lake Champlain region have seen the sea lamprey problem addressed.”

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.



Great Lakes Fishery Commission executive secretary (then commission vice-chair) Robert Lambe (right) presents Dr. Brad Young with the 2013 Vernon Applegate Award for Outstanding Contributions to Sea Lamprey Control. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission presented the award to Dr. Young on May 28, 2013, during its annual meeting, held in Montreal, Quebec. Photo: J. Wingfield.