

THE SFAAS “NEWSREEL”

Number 20 / March 2023

The US Aquaculture Society recently met in New Orleans. Auburn’s SFAAS “stole the show”. The presidential gavel was passed from a former faculty member to a current one, SFAAS faculty members won early career and lifetime achievement awards, and a SFAAS graduate student won the best student presentation. Read all about it in this issue of *Newsreel*!

This issue also recognizes a retiring faculty member, several notable grants and a paper, College award winners, new people, a new baby, and news from an alum!

Please keep sending things in, so we can let people know what is happening...

Joe Tomasso
Professor & Director (and *Newsreel* editor!)

You can find past *Newsreels* at
<https://agriculture.auburn.edu/research/faas/newsletters/>



A photograph of Bill Daniels, a man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt and khaki pants. He is standing in the center of a group of men, holding a blue and black bag. The group consists of men of various ages and ethnicities, some wearing traditional saris. They are standing in front of a building with a corrugated metal roof. The word "RETIRING" is written in yellow capital letters in the top left corner of the image.

RETIRING

Bill with a group
of prawn farmers
in Bangladesh

Bill Daniels Will retire this Spring after twenty years as a faculty member in SFAAS.

During his career with us, he spent much of his time leading development projects in Cambodia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Liberia, Vietnam, Ghana, and elsewhere.

He also took our production aquaculture class to Vietnam over a period of ten years.

We wish Bill a happy retirement.



NEW LAB MANAGER

Austin Hannah is the new manager of Nathan Whelan's lab. He is from Nashville and holds a BS from the University of Tennessee and a MS from Austin Peay State University.

Prior to joining us, Austin spent three years leading environmental DNA projects at the Whitney Genetics Lab in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The projects focused on threatened and endangered species as well as invasive species.



EARLY CAREER AWARD

Ian Butts received the **Distinguished Early Career Award** from the United States Aquaculture Society during the annual meeting recently held in New Orleans.

He is shown here with our very own Anita Kelly, the current president of USAS.



DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

At the recent meeting of the United States Aquaculture Society in New Orleans, the World Aquaculture Society recognized **Rex Dunham** with the **Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award**.

Antonio Garza de Yta (MS, PhD 2001 from AU), past president of WAS, presented the award.

The award recognizes a long-time commitment of service to aquaculture that is deemed highly significant and enduring.



BEST ABSTRACT & TRAVEL AWARD

Helen Montague won the **Best Abstract and Student Travel Award** at the United States Aquaculture Society meeting recently held in New Orleans.

She was also one of three students to present their work in the Student Spotlight during the plenary session.

Helen is a MS student in Ian Butts' lab.

She is shown here receiving her award from Bill Walton, outgoing USAS president and former SFAAS faculty member.



NEW PRESIDENT FOR USAS

Anita Kelly became the president of the United States Aquaculture Society during the recent Aquaculture America conference in New Orleans.

Anita is an Extension Professor at our Alabama Fish Farming Center in Greensboro. She focuses on warmwater fish diseases and runs the diagnostic services lab for the West Alabama fish farmers.

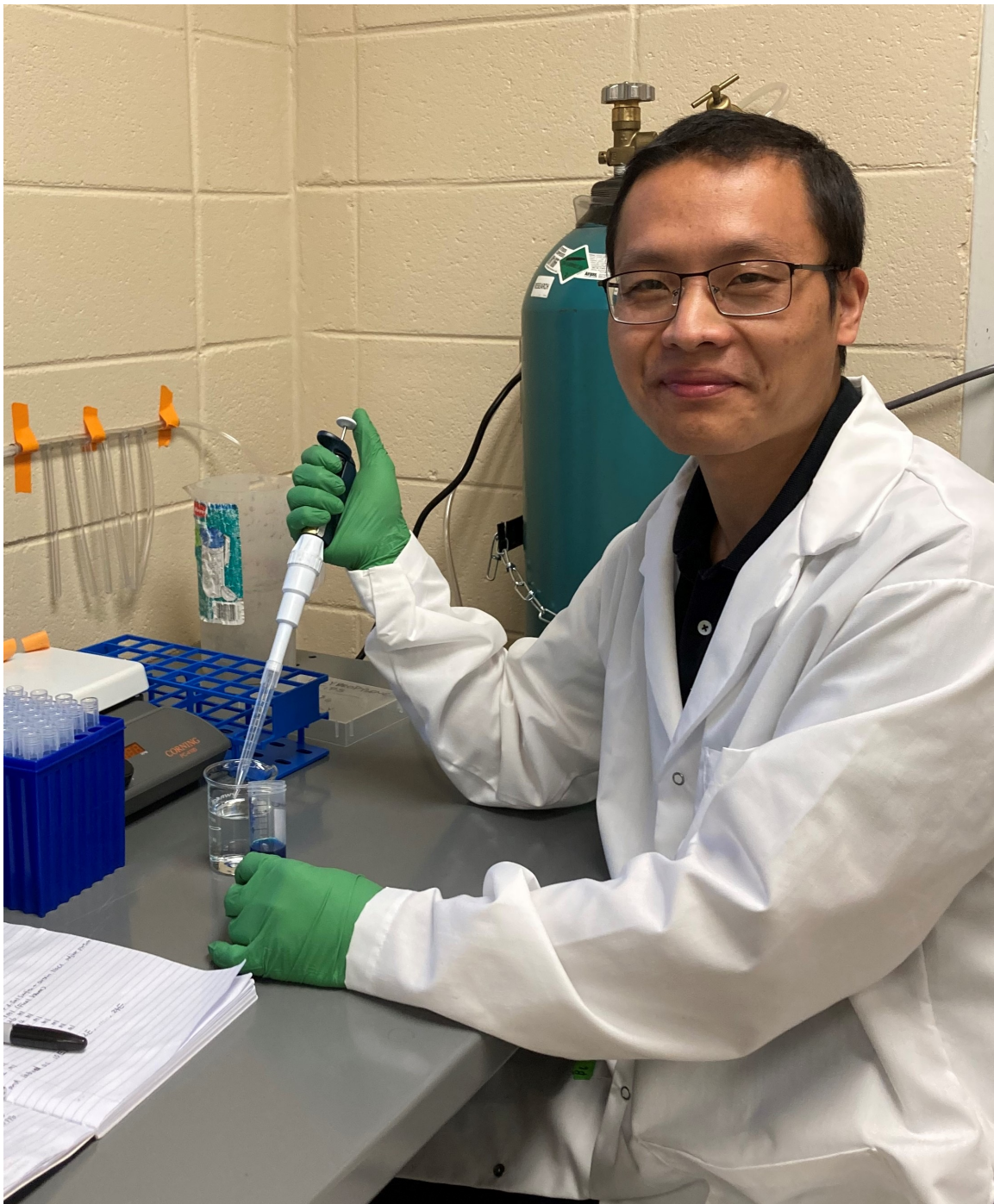
DEAN'S GRANTSMANSHIP AWARD



Three of our faculty members recently received the **Dean's Grantsmanship Award**.

Tim Bruce
Ash Bullard
Matt Catalano

The award was established to reward the great efforts faculty members make to be successful in obtaining extramural grants and contracts and to inspire faculty to devote greater efforts to enhancing research in the College of Agriculture.



HIGH-IMPACT FACTOR AWARD

Kevin Wang recently won the **Dean's Award for Outstanding Publication in a Journal with a High Impact Factor.**

The award is to recognize faculty members who publish in top-tier, peer-reviewed journals.

Kevin's article was published in *Nature Nanotechnology* which has an impact factor of 40.5.

The paper can be found here:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41565-022-01082-8>

DEAN'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

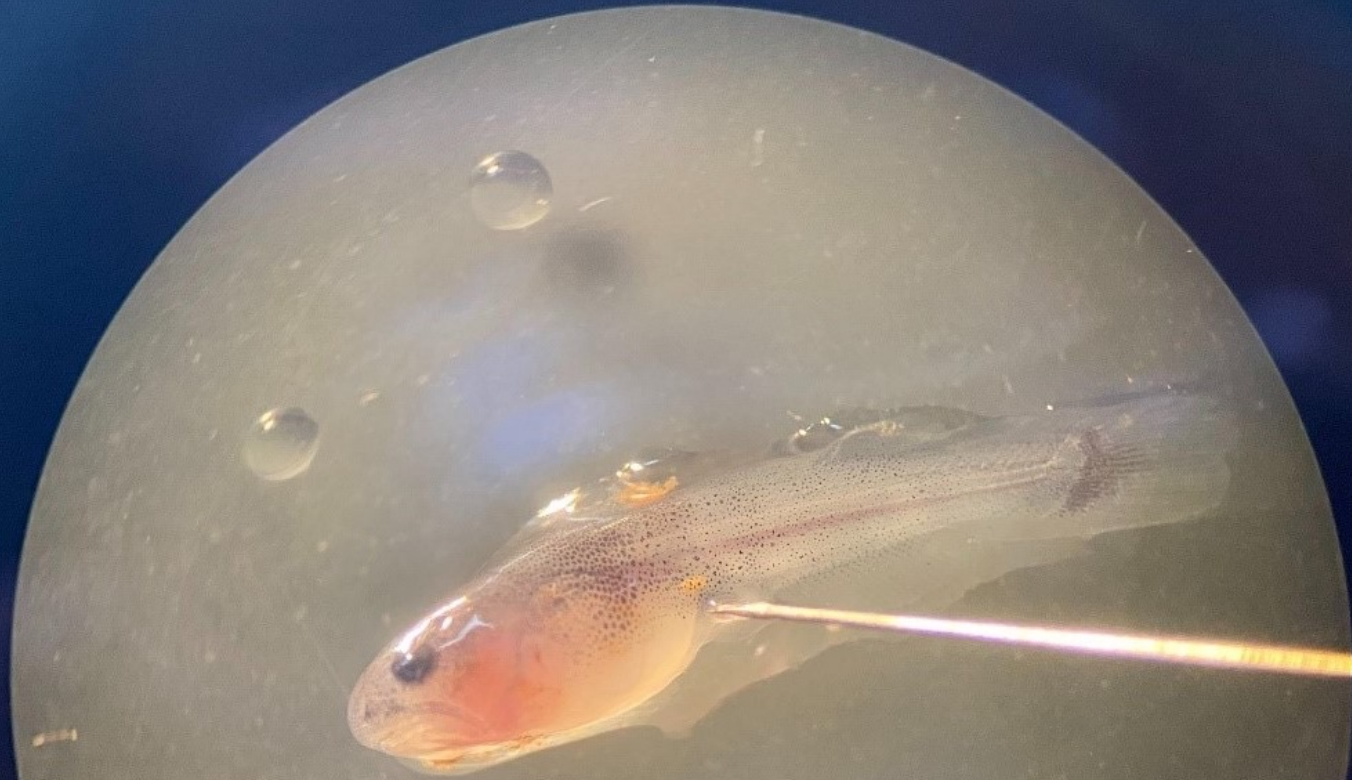
Anita Kelly recently received the **Dean's Award for Excellence in Extension and Outreach**.

The award recognizes a faculty or staff member who demonstrates outstanding service and scholarship through extension and outreach programs.

She is shown here patrolling catfish country in the "catfishmobile"



NEW NIFA GRANT

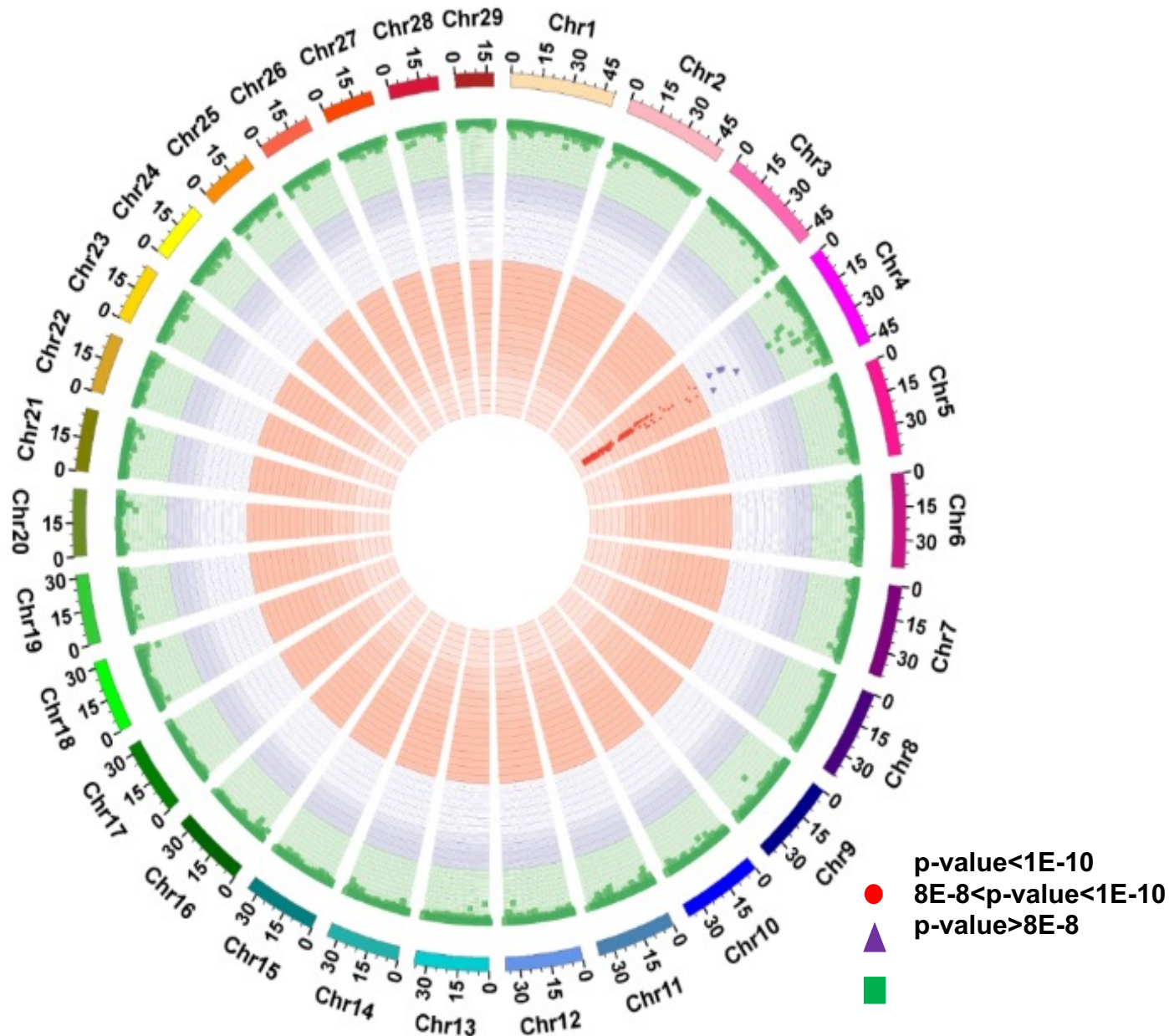


Five-day old triploid white catfish fry being injected with blue catfish stem cells in the genital ridge

Rex Dunham, Ian Butts & Baofeng Su recently received a \$650,000 grant from the USDA-NIFA program to increase colonization of blue catfish stem cells and develop techniques for early detection of xenogenesis in triploid channel catfish males.

The goal of this work is to efficiently provide a supply of blue catfish sperm for producing blue catfish X channel catfish hybrids. Currently, blue catfish males must be sacrificed to provide sperm.

NEW NIFA GRANT



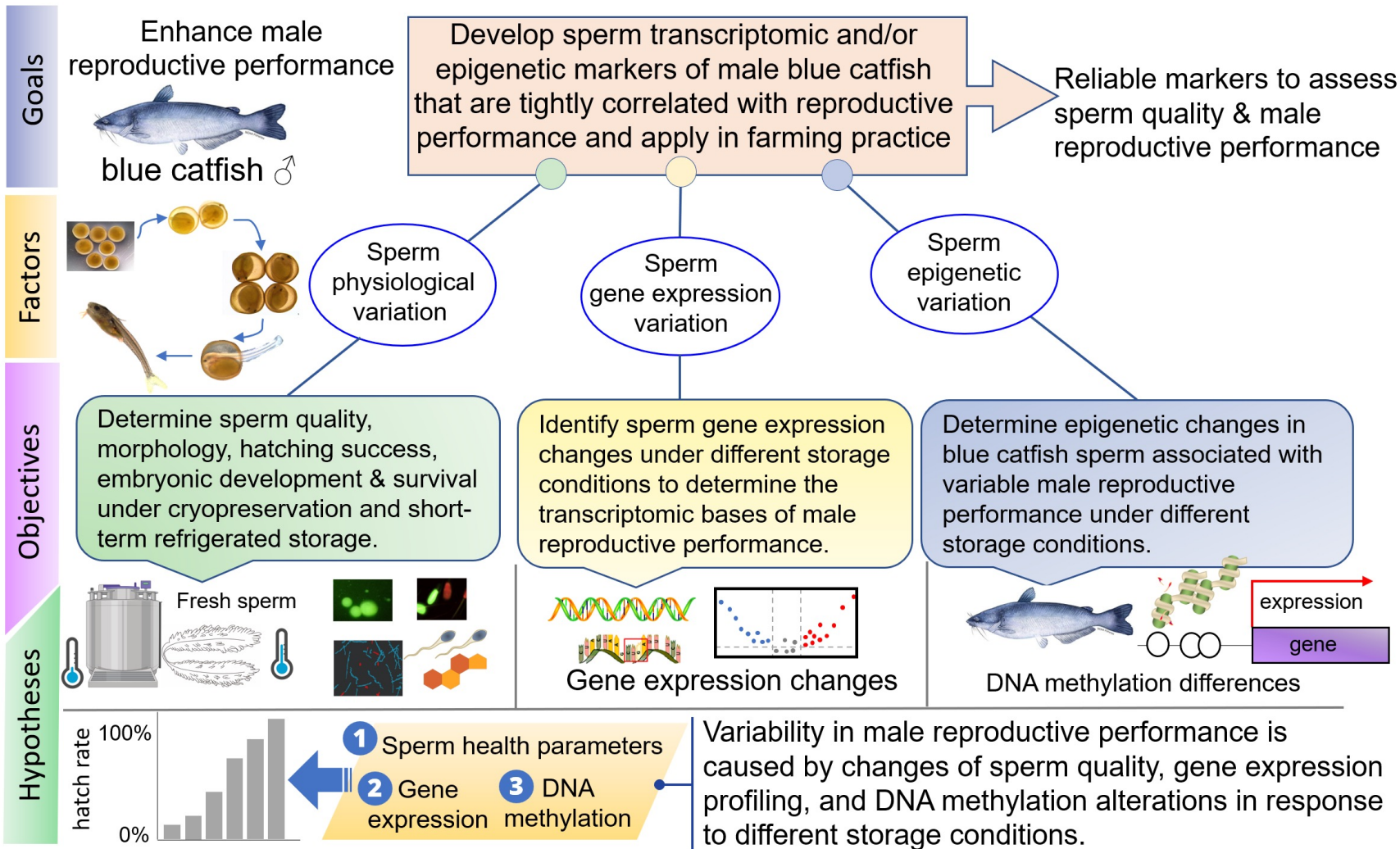
John Liu and Rex Dunham recently received a \$650,000 grant from the USDA-NIFA program to develop an understanding of hybrid incompatibility and reproductive isolation of channel and blue catfish.

Previously, Liu and Dunham determined how sex is determined in channel catfish. This new grant will allow them to study how sex is determined in blue catfish and hybrid catfish – and how the mechanisms compare to the genetic and epigenetic mechanisms in channel catfish.

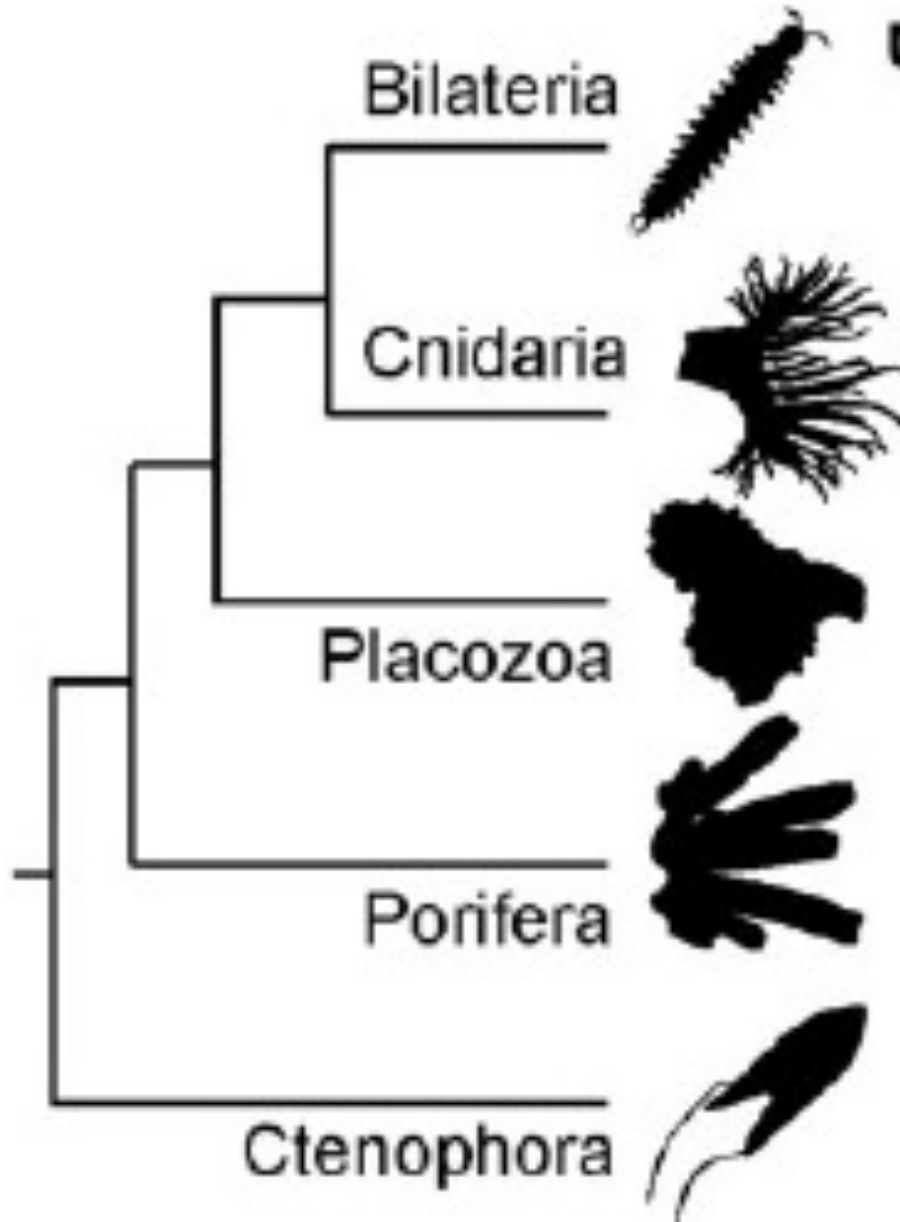
NEW NIFA GRANT

Xu Wang, Ian Butts & Rex Dunham recently received a \$650,000 grant from the USDA-NIFA program to determine if cryopreservation of blue catfish sperm will negatively affect fish produced from such sperm.

Sperm quality, sperm morphology, hatching success, embryonic development, reproductive performance, and production characteristics will be assessed.



NOTABLE ARTICLE



Nathan Whelan and Kenneth Halanych from UNC Wilmington recently published a “Matters arising” article in *Nature Communications*.

The paper critically examines recent efforts to apply poorly tested phylogenetic methods to infer deep animal relationships. Whelan and Halanych argue that such methods often increase systematic errors, leading to false conclusions.

Based on their examination, Whelan and Halanych feel that evidence still supports ctenophores as the likely sister lineage to all other animals.

The full paper can be found at:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-36151-6>

Aquaculture and Fisheries Biotechnology

Genetic Approaches

REX A. DUNHAM

3RD EDITION



NEW BOOK

The third edition of **Rex Dunham's** book, *Aquaculture and Fisheries Biotechnology – Genetic Approaches*, was recently published in its electronic version. The hard copy will follow soon.

The book addresses both fisheries and aquaculture applications. It contains chapters on history, basic genetics, selective breeding, hybridization, xenogenesis, modern molecular genetics approaches, commercialization, government regulation, environmental impacts, ethics, and more.



OYSTER GARDENING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Gulf Coast Media recently published an article on oyster gardening in Little Lagoon.

Oyster gardening activities in the area are largely a result of efforts by **PJ Waters** and the staff at **AUMERC**.

The article can be found here:

<https://gulfcoastmedia.com/stories/summer-oyster-gardening-hobby-for-little-lagoon-residents-equals-cleaner-water,158102>



Tim Bruce and his wife Larissa welcomed **Ainsley Bruce** on March 1 at EAMC.

She was 7lb, 14 oz at birth and is doing well.

Ainsley is shown here with her sister, Adair (2 yrs), and brother, Calum (4 yrs).

NEW TIGER





ALUMNI UPDATE

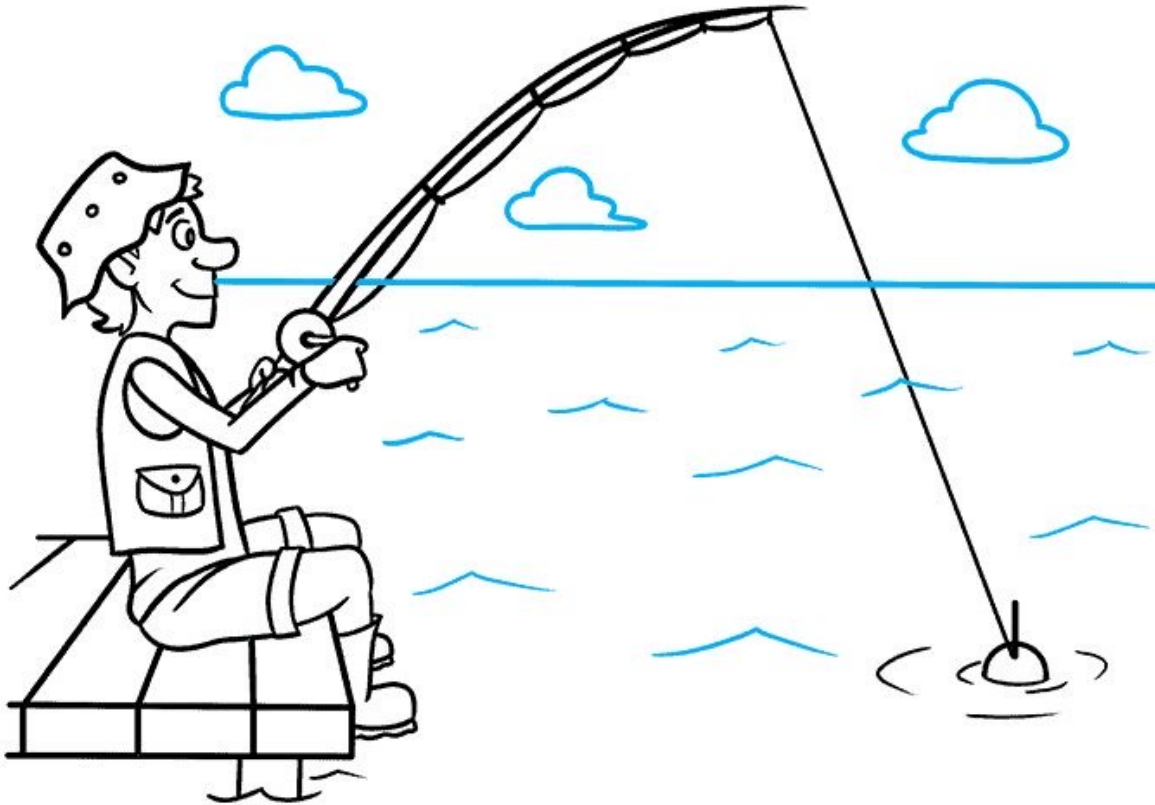
Kevin Hopkins (PhD, 1979) is a professor *emeritus* at the University of Hawaii, Hilo. He recently completed his final graduate student and is preparing his last manuscript for publication.

Kevin now intends to focus on his “bucket list”. He recently rode the complete Route 66 on his Harley Davidson and is becoming a regular at ski resorts across the western US.

His next adventure is a trip to Australia and New Zealand followed by a long US road trip in his Porsche, which will include a stop in Auburn.

SFAAS wishes a fair wind and following seas to Kevin...

DAVID PARTRIDGE BIG BASS TOURNAMENT / REGISTRATION



The annual **David Partridge Memorial Fishing Tournament** will be held at North Auburn on April 22.

Proceeds this year will be split between the David Partridge and the Mike Maceina Scholarship Endowments.

Contact Graves Lovell for more information (334 844 8959)