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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 7, 2011

### **NEFSC Scientist Named Recipient of Presidential Early Career Award**

David Richardson, a fisheries biologist at NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), has been named a recipient of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor given by the U.S. government to outstanding scientists and engineers in the early stages of their independent research careers. The award will be presented October 14 at a formal ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Richardson is being recognized for developing a new method for calculating spawning stock biomass, a critical factor in the fish stock assessments used by fisheries managers to set sustainable levels for fishing. Richardson's method for calculating an index of Atlantic herring spawning stock biomass has since been applied to Atlantic mackerel, silver hake and pollock – a fishery that alone is worth more than \$10 million annually. His work also led to the development of a population model that explains historical patterns of population highs and lows in the Atlantic herring fishery.

After earning a Ph.D. in marine biology and fisheries in 2007 from the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, Richardson accepted a National Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's Narragansett Laboratory in Rhode Island, working with Jon Hare, also a larval fish biologist and head of the Center's Oceanography Branch. When the fellowship ended in 2009, Richardson accepted a position at the lab as a research fisheries biologist.

Richardson grew up in Sierra Madre, California and developed an interest in the marine environment early in life with visits to tide pools and beaches. Snorkeling led to interest in becoming a SCUBA diver in high school. At Cornell University he was a natural resources major, which combines forestry and fisheries, "but definitely gravitated to the fisheries side" before receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in 1999. After working for the California Department of Fish and Game and for the Seminole Tribe of Florida, he enrolled in graduate school at the University of Miami, focused on larval fish studies.

The Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers were established by President Clinton in 1996. Richardson is one of three NOAA scientists to receive the award this year.

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#### Related Links:

President to honor high-achieving early career NOAA scientists:

[http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2011/20110926\\_earlycareer.html](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2011/20110926_earlycareer.html)

Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/26/president-obama-honors-outstanding-early-career-scientists>

Northeast Fisheries Science Center: <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/aboutus.htm>