



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA Honors Shrimp Fishermen for Pioneering Turtle-Saving and Fuel-Saving Gear

NOAA's Fisheries Service will give Patrick F. Riley, Capt. Manuel Calderón, and Capt. Louis Stephenson a national award for their leadership in testing equipment that reduces the incidental catch of sea turtles as well as their development of gear that reduces fuel use in the Gulf and South Atlantic shrimp industry.

NOAA's leaders will present Riley, Calderón and Stephenson, all of Texas, with the Stewardship and Sustainability Award at the third annual Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on June 2.

"The health and sustainability of the planet's ocean resources is of paramount importance for the world's environmental, economic, and human wellbeing," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "The contributions of our honorees inspire others and enhance NOAA's work to conserve and manage our nation's marine resources."

"The team of Riley, Calderón, and Stephenson has pioneered the use of important environmental devices as well as fuel-efficient trawl gear," said Jim Balsiger, acting assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "They have shown fellow shrimp fishermen they can continue to bring in plentiful catches while protecting turtles and other important species."

The three fishermen have worked collaboratively with NOAA's Fisheries Service, the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation and Sea Grant to evaluate and improve bycatch reduction and turtle excluder devices.

Drawing on his background in mechanical engineering, Mr. Riley of Freeport, Texas, the general manager of Western Seafood Company, also designed shrimp trawl gear that reduces fuel use by an estimated 28 to 39 percent while achieving the same catch results. This gear was then carefully tested by longtime fishermen Calderón of Angleton, Texas, and Stephenson of Hitchcock, Texas, who helped perfect the gear design. Calderón also designed the "skinny" two-seam net, a trawl that requires less webbing and further reduces fuel consumption while maintaining an equal harvest. Stephenson also worked tirelessly with fishermen across the Gulf and South Atlantic states to troubleshoot and solve production concerns with the new trawl gear. His outreach efforts sped the conversion to this new gear.

For the full list of Sustainable Fisheries Leadership award winners go to: www.noaa.gov

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On the Web: NOAA Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>