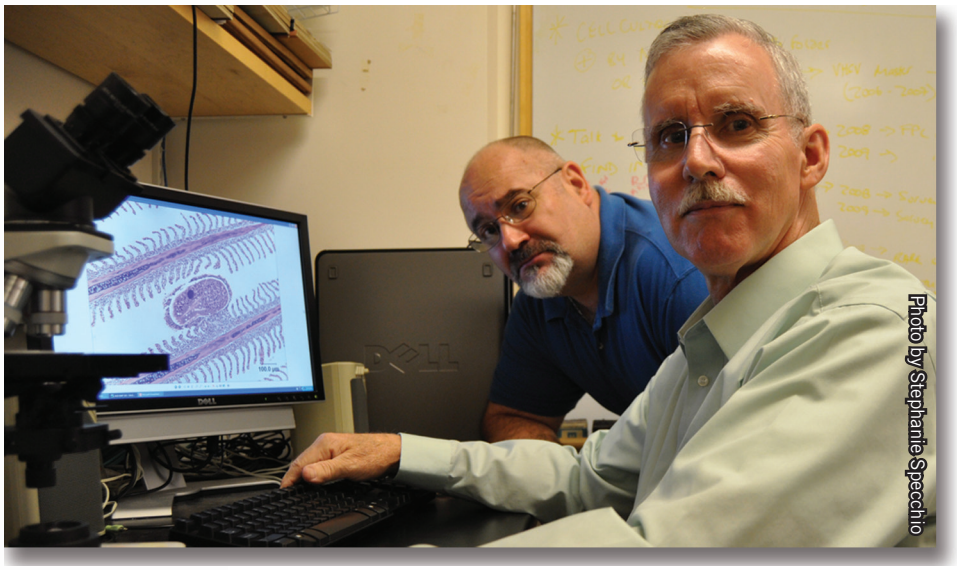
Currents



Cornell University's Dr. Paul Bowser (at computer) and NYSG's Fisheries Specialist Dave MacNeill were recently recognized for translating Great Lakes fish disease science for the general public.

Cornell Researcher and NYSG Specialist Receive First-Ever Award

This past October at a Sea Grant meeting in New Orleans, LA, Cornell University researcher **Dr. Paul Bowser** and New York Sea Grant (NYSG) Fisheries Specialist **Dave MacNeill** were named the recipients of the Sea Grant Association's first-ever "Research to Application Award." This honor recognizes one researcher or research team for the successful and continued real-world application of a Sea Grant-funded research project conducted during the past 20 years.

Bowser and MacNeill were recognized for demonstrating how their work on the Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia Virus (VHSV) is being applied and utilized in a non-academic setting. This viral disease has caused significant mortality events in a wide diversity of fish species as well as restrictions on the commercial transport of live fish in the Great Lakes Basin.

In New York, the non-treatable viral fish pathogen poses a potential threat to the sportfishing industry which contributes $1.4 billion annually to the State's economy, according to recent U.S. Census Bureau estimates.

"Receiving such an award was a true honor," said Bowser, a faculty member of Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine since 1985. "Having the research results benefit the end user is very satisfying."

Through funding by NYSG and other sources, VHSV research by Bowser and the members of the Aquatic Animal Health Program at Cornell have provided detailed information about the virus, its spread, and its impact on Great Lakes fisheries, as well as sensitive detection methods. This information has been used by MacNeill and others to inform the fishing community and other important stakeholders of methods to limit virus spread and minimize its impact.

"This is a compelling example of the application of Sea Grant research to an important coastal problem," said MacNeill, who is working with Bowser to develop a NYSG fact sheet on the strain of VHSV being studied in the Aquatic Animal Health Program at Cornell.

Also, in December 2009 and June 2010, NYSG partnered with Lake Champlain and Pennsylvania Sea Grant programs to run, respectively, regional aquaculture workshops in Albany, NY and Lamar, PA. While the virus has not been found in fish culture facilities, the adverse impact of VHSV in aquaculture could be significant.

Based on workshop evaluations, all of the workshop attendees indicated that they would utilize Sea Grant's suggested guidelines in their own fish-rearing facilities and share the information with other aquaculture practitioners.

—Paul C. Focazio