



# New England Fishery Management Council

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## Council Presents 2021 Award for Excellence to Frank Mirarchi

The New England Fishery Management Council today presented its 2021 Janice Plante Award for Excellence to Frank Mirarchi of Scituate, MA. Frank has been involved in the fishing industry for over five decades, both as an active commercial fisherman and as a dedicated partner in cooperative research.

The award was established by the Council in 2015 to annually honor an individual who has produced exceptional work “to further the effectiveness of the fishery management process in New England.” In particular, the Council seeks to pay special tribute to people who have displayed an outstanding commitment to the Council fishery management system and contributed time and energy to the process.

This year’s award recipient more than fits that bill. Over the course of his career, Frank has served on many of the Council’s advisory panels and working groups, including the Groundfish Advisory Panel, the Research Steering Committee, the Electronic Monitoring Working Group, the Multispecies Monitoring Committee, and the Interspecies Advisory Panel. He continues to serve as one of the Council’s representatives on the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel, as well as on a steering committee that is working on issues related to Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management.

In the early 1990s, Frank was appointed to the Council as a sitting member, although his Council service is not the basis for this award. Rather, his dozens of years of concerted and selfless efforts to improve upon fishery management and the science that underpins it made him the Executive Committee’s top choice as the 2021 award recipient.

Council Chairman Eric Reid said, “Frank always made decisions that were fair, equitable, and based on sound science. He never pulled back from doing what he thought was right, even when the resulting action would impact his own business.”



*Frank Mirarchi in the wheelhouse.*

*– Massachusetts Fishermen’s Partnership webpage photo*

While the Council’s award is in recognition of Frank’s extensive contributions to federal fisheries management and the Council process, he was extremely active on the state level as well. He was instrumental in the success of the Industry-Based Survey for Gulf of Maine Cod, overseen by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). He was a 17-year member



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of DMF's Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, serving as vice chair or chair for many of those years. In 1994, the state presented him with the prestigious Dr. David Belding Award for all he had done to "promote the conservation and sustainable use of the Commonwealth's marine resources." And, he continues to serve on the board of directors for the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership.

## A Witness to Change

Frank Mirarchi began fishing before the regional fishery management council system was created in 1976 under what is now known as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. He attended a public hearing when the act was under development and therefore witnessed the establishment and evolution of the regional fishery management council system from the ground up.

He fished through a whirlwind of changes in vessel designs, gear modifications, and management measures. He saw the introduction of the Hague Line that divided Georges Bank between the U.S. and Canada through a 1984 World Court decision. At the start of his career, groundfish fishing meant throwing back small fish and staying out of closed areas. It then morphed to a new regime of days-at-sea and, eventually, groundfish sectors.

He firmly believed in research and was committed to contributing data to help sustainably manage the fisheries he had built his life around. He outfitted his last boat to make cooperative research more doable. He took part in a vast array of projects that ranged from Gulf of Maine cod spawning identification to spiny dogfish excluder devices in whiting trawls and so much more.

In presenting the Council's 2021 award, Chairman Reid concluded, "Frank has rightfully earned his reputation for being well spoken and fair minded. He has a natural ability to listen to others and engage in respectful discourse. He is resourceful, persistent, and trustworthy. He continues to share his institutional knowledge and remains deeply committed to the betterment of fishery management. He truly is a remarkable person and a kind human being."



*Above, Frank Mirarchi, standing in red shirt at right, waits his turn to provide testimony during a New England Fishery Management Council meeting in 2013. Below, the inscription on the Council's 2021 Janice Plante Award for Excellence.*

