

Lyles-Simpson Award  
Recipient  
2020



*Harriet MacGill Perry*

## **Harriet MacGill Perry**

It is with great pleasure that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission presents the 2020 Lyles-Simpson Award to Harriet MacGill Perry. This prestigious award is presented annually to an individual, agency, or organization which has contributed to the betterment of the fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico through significant biological, industrial, legislative, enforcement, or administrative activities.

Harriet started her scientific work as a histology technician for a student job, and spent hours sectioning and staining radioactive mouse tongues for a sensory biophysicist at FSU. This work led to her first job after graduation as a histology med-tech at Baptist Hospital in Pensacola where she prepared slides of sputum samples to test for Tuberculosis, and worked with the pathologist to describe and dissect pieces off of body parts to place them in paraffin, slice them, make slides and stain them. Longing for a different career in the sciences, she traded her nurse boots for flip flops and went to grad school.

Over the past 50+ years, she has been an educator, researcher, and collaborator in the disciplines of environmental science and aquatic biology. Her primary interests are varied, and include the research of Brachyuran (true) crabs, population dynamics of estuarine and marine invertebrates, invertebrate taxonomy, blue crab aquaculture, invasive species, and management of marine fisheries. In addition to these studies, she has also mentored, trained, and educated people around the entire Gulf of Mexico ranging from fishermen, to environmental groups, to students and scientists.

Harriet taught fishermen how to manage blue crab populations, and helped them better understand their sampling gear. In return, the fishermen would share their catch data, and permit her and/or her students to accompany them when they fished, thus strengthening ties between the

fishing community and the scientific community. Harriet helped in creating a blue crab database to record this information. This database has tracked the rise and decline of the blue crab populations in given areas over the last 40 years.

Harriet initiated a blue crab aquaculture program. The program cultivates crabs, and provides labs throughout the United States with the larval and adult crabs. Harriet's expertise also extends to other crab species such as deep sea crabs. NOAA asked her to lead a team of scientists following the BP oil spill to assess the impact on deep sea red crabs. With the data acquired from this project, a population comparison was made from results gathered from earlier years.

Utilizing her contacts across the Gulf Coast, she helped organize the Derelict Crab Trap Program with different agencies in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. This program was awarded the second place Gulf Guardian Award in the government category in 2004.

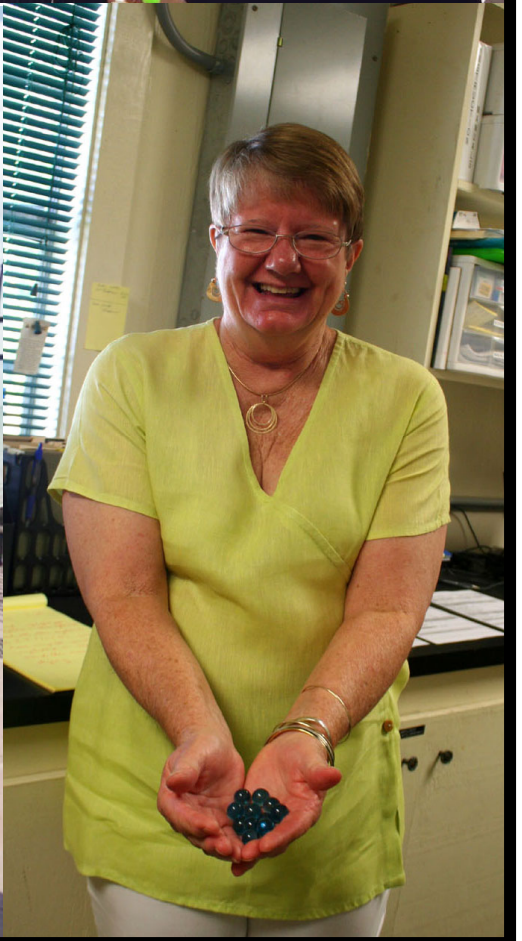
Harriet was a lead biologist in the testing of mercury/selenium levels of numerous marine and estuarine fish. The data from this study revealed that blue marlin had extremely high mercury levels. While attending conferences in the Caribbean Islands, she helped inform locals about the high levels of mercury found in blue marlin, which is a dietary staple for many villages.

Over her career, Harriet has educated students, formed numerous partnerships, published over 50 articles, and given over 30 presentations across the United States and the Caribbean. She procured grants totaling over \$6M between 2000 and 2012 that supported her students and their projects. For all of these accomplishments and her years of service to the TCC's Crab Subcommittee, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission is proud to present the 2020 Lyles-Simpson Award to such a worthy recipient.









# Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Past Lyles-Simpson Award Recipients

<i>Charles H. Lyles</i>	1984
<i>Theodore B. Ford</i>	1985
<i>J.Y. Christmas</i>	1986
<i>John Breaux</i>	1987
<i>John Ray Nelson</i>	1988
<i>I.B. "Buck" Byrd</i>	1989
<i>Hugh A. Swingle</i>	1990
<i>John A. Mehos</i>	1991
<i>J. Burton Angelle</i>	1992
<i>Louis A. Villanova</i>	1993
<i>Theodore H. Shepard</i>	1994
<i>Edwin A. Joyce, Jr.</i>	1995
<i>Tommy D. Candies</i>	1996
<i>Walter M. Tatum</i>	1997
<i>Thomas L. Heffernan</i>	1998
<i>Trent Lott</i>	1999
<i>James M. Barkuloo</i>	2000
<i>Walter W. Fondren, III</i>	2001
<i>Jerald K. Waller</i>	2002
<i>Andrew J. Kemmerer</i>	2003
<i>Hal R. Osborn</i>	2004
<i>Leroy Kiffe</i>	2005
<i>Robert P. Jones</i>	2006
<i>Wayne E. Swingle</i>	2007
<i>Ralph Rayburn</i>	2008
<i>William S. "Corky" Perret</i>	2009
<i>Albert L. King</i>	2010
<i>Virginia A. Vail</i>	2011
<i>R. Vernon Minton</i>	2012
<i>Larry B. Simpson</i>	2013
<i>Michael C. Voisin</i>	2014
<i>Ellie Francisco Roche</i>	2015
<i>Michael S. Ray</i>	2016
<i>Joseph I. Gill, Jr.</i>	2017
<i>Christopher M. Blankenship</i>	2018
<i>William Borden Wallace</i>	2019

