



## SAFS Spring Newsletter | June 2026

### Director's Message



The end of the academic year is a time that naturally leads us to reflect on the past year, and to look ahead to the next. Doing so fills me with deep pride and admiration for SAFS, as our faculty, staff and students have achieved so much despite numerous challenges. They continue to make important scientific breakthroughs on so many topics: unraveling equity in seafood trade, decoding whale vocalization, identifying threats of climate change to kelps and steelhead, documenting gaps in river conservation, and much more.

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## News and Updates



### **2026 Bevan Symposium Celebrates the Careers of Federal Fisheries Professionals**

The 2026 Bevan Symposium on Sustainable Fisheries celebrated the careers and successes of recently retired NOAA Fisheries professionals. Ten individuals from around the country visited the School to reflect on their careers, their accomplishments, and the future of the fisheries in the U.S.

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### **Celebrating Professor Daniel Schindler's Election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences**

Our very own Professor Daniel Schindler was elected to the 2026 class of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in recognition of his groundbreaking research on climate change, freshwater ecosystems and fisheries. Professor Schindler's work has helped advance understanding of salmon habitats, watershed health and ecosystem resilience across Alaska and the Pacific Northwest.

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### **Summer Research on the Rio Grande**

During the summer of 2025, members of the Wood Lab travelled to Albuquerque, New Mexico to work with Drs. Tom Turner and Sara Brant from University of New Mexico Museum of Southwestern Biology to quantify the change in parasite abundance and diversity in the Rio Grande over the past 72 years, a

period stretching from 1938 to 2010. Tom is the Curator of the Fish Collection and Sara is the Manager of the Parasite Collection.

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## SAFS in the News

From field sites across the globe to headlines around the world, SAFS research is making an impact. Our faculty, researchers, and students are advancing science internationally, and their work is being recognized by media outlets at the local, national, and global levels. Read some of the latest stories featuring SAFS below.



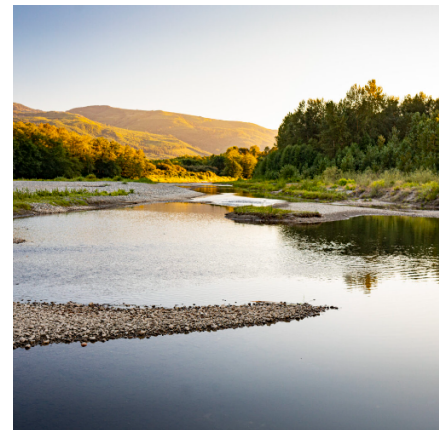
### [\*\*UW researchers decipher beluga calls to bolster conservation efforts\*\*](#)

In a new study, University of Washington scientists eavesdropped on Cook Inlet belugas, recording more than 1,700 calls representing 21 different behavioral encounters. This work builds on a 2023 study showing that noise from commercial shipping, the primary industry in the



### [\*\*SAFS students are 'going beyond'\*\*](#)

SAFS undergraduate Callie Murakami and others are featured in the Viewpoint Magazine. The cover article, written by Hannelore Sudermann, details how SAFS and other UW undergraduates are learning through community engaged partnerships. Sudermann writes: "The classroom doesn't end at the edge of



### [\*\*The vast majority of US rivers lack any protections from human activities, new research finds\*\*](#)

Most rivers in the United States flow with little real protection, even though they supply drinking water, support wildlife, and shape our landscapes. New research co-led by Julian Olden finds that nearly two-thirds of U.S. rivers lack safeguards for water

region, masks common beluga calls. Although many marine mammals rely more on sound than sight, our understanding of acoustic communication among these animals is limited.

campus. For students across disciplines, it extends into communities, ecosystems and partnerships across the state — places where knowledge is applied, tested and shared, and where education becomes a way to contribute to something larger."

quality, habitat, and biodiversity. The findings show how much of the nation's river network remains exposed and how much work still lies ahead.

## Student and Postdoc Achievements



### **SAFS Graduate Student Recognized for Mentoring**

Connor Whalen received the College of the Environment's Exceptional Mentoring of Undergraduates award. This award, given annually to faculty, students and staff throughout the college, recognizes individuals for their efforts to develop undergraduate student research and the intellectual vibrancy of the College of the Environment.

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### **Markus Min and Stephanie Valdez Recipients of Smith Conservation Fellowship**

Markus Min and Stephanie Valdez were selected as recipients of the 2026 David H. Smith Conservation Research Fellowship. This is a highly competitive and prestigious award that recognizes future leaders in conservation science. Markus will advance

conservation of groupers by developing A.I. image classification tools, and Stephanie will explore how Olympia oyster restoration benefits Dungeness crab.

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## Supporting the SAFS Mission

At SAFS, we are committed to world-class research and training that makes a difference for ecosystems and people. Philanthropic support helps us expand opportunities for students, advance innovative research, and strengthen our impact in Washington and beyond. Thank you for helping us support the next generation of scientists and leaders.

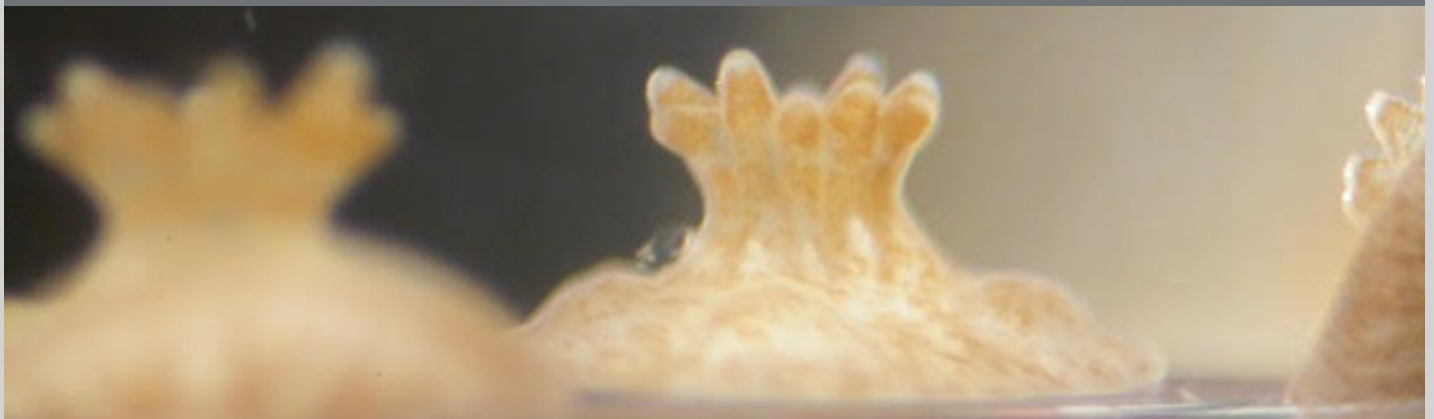
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