

April 2026



Addressing the Whale in the Office - Covert Bullying in Fisheries

By: Heather Moncrief-Cox, with Lynn Mattes

It usually starts small - a decline in morning greetings, less enthusiasm when discussing project ideas, or you're "accidentally" forgotten on important emails. You feel like you're overreacting, but the work colleague you respect and think of as a mentor and friend is suddenly giving you the cold



shoulder. So, you try harder to please them, whether it's volunteering to take on additional tasks or going the extra mile on a collaborative project, but the tension in the air is still there. Then you start to notice that other colleagues are also less receptive to you, you're no longer acknowledged in team meetings, or even worse, your hard work is credited to someone else. You start doubting yourself, wondering what it is that you are doing so wrong to cause this giant rift in the department that seemingly can't be mended... The problem, however, is that it's not YOU, it's your workplace bully covertly working behind the scenes.

The [Workplace Bullying Institute](#) (WBI) estimates in [their 2024 report](#) that over 50 million Americans have experienced bullying in the workplace, with over 50% of the targets being women.

Click [here](#) to read the full blog and the recommended actions for how to address covert bullying



IN THIS ISSUE

Covert Bullying in Fisheries

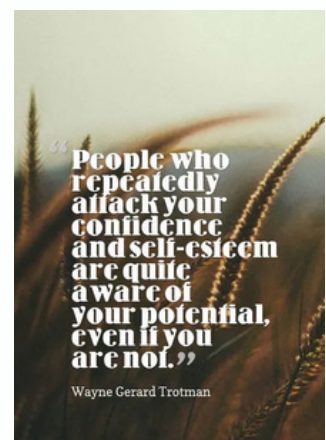
Profile of an Early Career Scientist

Lily Smalstig

Fishing for Opportunities

WoF Book Club

Summer Fiction Selection



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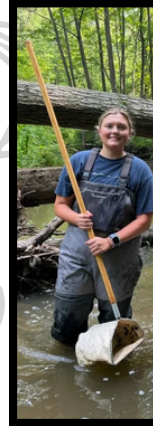
Contact us anonymously using the [WoF Anonymous Communication Form](#)

Profile of an Early Career Scientist - Lily Smalstig

In February, we announced the winners of the [Women of Fisheries Gives Back! Award](#) for early career fisheries scientists. Although we were only able to give out three awards, the applicants were excellent and we wanted to highlight a few of their unique journeys and experiences. Their experiences ranged from studying fish communities in Missouri streams, Midwest lakes, and Scottish lochs, to salmon research in Alaska and the United Kingdom, to climate research on marine fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and along the US Atlantic coast. Check out the profile below of one of our inspiring applicants.

“I grew up along Michigan’s St. Clair River, a place where water wasn’t just scenery, it was a way of life. That river shaped who I am and sparked my love for fisheries. One of my most vivid memories is from when I was 17, casting for muskie, the legendary “fish of 10,000 casts.” Against all odds, one bit on my very first cast. My dad, who had never caught a muskie himself, was right there beside me. We laughed, we celebrated, and honestly, I didn’t see that rod for a while as he was trying to catch one for himself! That moment wasn’t just about the fish: it was about connection, persistence, and the allure of water.”

“My fisheries interest is simple: to continue advancing fisheries conservation while helping people experience the outdoors and the joy of fishing. Looking back, every step, from that first muskie to managing national conservation programs, has been driven by the same belief: healthy waters connect us all. And that’s what keeps me passionate about this field every single day.”



[Click to find out more about Lily](#)



From early career to retired fisheries scientists, we would love to feature and amplify your experiences! Please fill out our [Women of Fisheries Profile form](#) to be featured individually in a future blog post!

Fishing for Opportunities



Student Opportunities

Position: [MS Georgia Rainbow Trout \(2\)](#)
Organization: University of Georgia
Deadline: 05/29/26

Position: [MS Data-poor Fisheries](#)
Organization: Cal Poly Humboldt
Deadline: 06/03/26

Position: [PhD Fisheries Ecology](#)
Organization: Louisiana State University
Deadline: 06/19/26

Job Opportunities

Position: (Seasonal) [Biological Science Tech](#)
Organization: Dept. of the Interior
Deadline: 05/15/26

Position: [Fisheries Biologist 3 - Klamath Quantitative Ecologist](#)
Organization: Pacific States Fisheries
Deadline: 05/19/26

Position: [Professor Freshwater Fish & Habitat Management](#)
Organization: University of Florida
Deadline: 05/30/26

Position: [Fishery Biologist 2 - White Sturgeon](#)
Organization: Pacific States Fisheries
Deadline: 06/01/26

Do you know someone who should be featured in a Fish Sister Profile or Research Highlight?

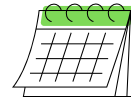
Nominate them now! Self nominations are also encouraged

[Nominate Today!](#) 

Join the [WoF Book Club!](#)



Our summer read is
Migrations by Charlotte
McConaghy



Save the Date for
the Discussion
July 12, 8pm EST

Help Support our Mission

Click the button below to make a quick one-time or monthly contribution to the Women of Fisheries, Inc. Funds will be used solely to fund our many initiatives for supporting women in fisheries. We are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, so your contribution is tax deductible. Thank you!



Shop our webshop for all your Women of Fisheries merchandise! Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support our mission to provide opportunities and services for women in the fisheries profession.

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