

AFS CERTIFICATION

The American Fisheries Society (AFS) offers a three-tiered certification program for fisheries biologists. Certification, widely practiced by many professions as a means of setting standards for professional recognition, affords fisheries professionals broader recognition and added credentials. In addition, certification provides a mechanism for responsible peer evaluation, providing government, nongovernment, private firms, courts, and the general public with a definitive minimum standard of experience and education.

Levels: An applicant who satisfies course work and degree requirements, but has limited professional experience, may qualify for certification as an Associate Fisheries Professional. Applicants who satisfy course work and degree requirements, have adequate years of professional experience, and have participated in a range of professional development activities may become Certified Fisheries Professionals. Specific requirements for certification include a set of minimum course work requirements, including fishery and aquatic sciences, biological and physical sciences, mathematics and statistics, communications, and human dimensions courses. For individuals seeking Certified Fisheries Professional status, a minimum degree and minimum number of years of experience must be attained, in addition to demonstration of participation in continuing education and service activities and production of written and oral communications. An individual who has held the Certified Fisheries Professional designation for at least 20 years and who is employed less than full time or is retired may qualify as an Emeritus Fisheries Professional. Applicants who are approved for the Associate Fisheries Professional designation hold that credential for up to eight years. Certified Fisheries Professionals hold that designation for five years, after which they must renew their certification through the Board of Professional Certification.

Since the inception of the certification program in 1963, several thousand individuals have been awarded Associate Fisheries Professional, Certified Fisheries Professional, or Emeritus Fisheries Professional status. Fisheries professionals in academia, government, and private industry have used these designations as a means of establishing themselves within their profession and advancing the field as a whole.

For a more complete description of certification requirements, or to obtain an application for professional certification, visit the AFS Web site at www.fisheries.org and click on "Certification." Applications for certification are received continuously by the AFS headquarters office and are reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Board of Professional Certification. Questions may be addressed to 301-897-8616, ext. 201 or to ggoldberg@fisheries.org.

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