

Maryann Watson, Master of Marine Management Gold Award Recipient, 2015



Maryann graduated from the University of Victoria with a BSc in Biology with a concentration in Marine Biology. She completed part of her degree at the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre on Vancouver Island. She obtained her CAUS scientific diving certification and joined a field team on Kiritimati Atoll to study human impacts to the local reef. Maryann led household surveys of the local community on Kiritimati, focusing on fishing behaviour and perceptions of change in the fishery. These experiences focused her interest in fisheries management and incorporating local user knowledge into conservation and management solutions.

During her Master of Marine Management degree, Maryann pursued her interests learning how solutions are developed using both scientific and socioecological data. In the summer of 2015, Maryann undertook an internship with Watershed Watch Salmon Society and collaborated with the University of British Columbia's Pacific Salmon Conservation and Ecology lab on a project examining the handling methods of incidentally caught chum salmon in the pink salmon purse seining fishery on BC's North coast.

The project aimed to improve handling practices of chum salmon before release through study of factors that contribute to the post-release survival of the fish including their physiology, injury sustained from fishing and handling, and their vitality when brought onboard. Maryann interviewed commercial Pacific salmon fishers and managers of the fishery to gain a better understanding of the opinions of selective fishing policies and the suggested handling practices for salmon bycatch. She also learned about practical solutions to current management issues within the industry and opinions on how to improve survival of released fish. Maryann's graduate project research paper, *Bycatch 22: Regulatory pressures of selective fishing on commercial salmon fishers and impacts of handling on chum salmon (*Onchorhynchus keta*) released from purse seine fisheries in Northern British Columbia* is available at <http://dalspace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/70751>.

Since completing the MMM, Maryann is working at the University of Victoria as a research assistant for Dr. Julia Baum [Dal Grad] and collaborating with Dr. Susanna Fuller (Ecology Action Centre) on a report for Oceana Canada on rebuilding Canada's fisheries. In March, she will join Dr. Baum's field team as a scientific diver on the Kiritimati atoll as part of a [long-term](#)

[study](#) to assess the impacts of the 2015 El Niño event on coral bleaching. In April, she will be going to work for Coral Cay Conservation on Southern Leyte, Philippines as their Science Officer. Maryann received guidance on her research from MAP Adjunct Professor John Kearney.

Maryann is the recipient of the Douglas M. Johnston MASC Scholarship in Marine Affairs and the Sobey Fund for Oceans Scholarship. She was co-chair (along with classmate Elizabeth Edmondson) of the Sobey Fund for Oceans supported very successful [Sustainable Oceans 2015](#) student led conference that was held on October 2-3, 2015.
