

IGFA Honors 2018 Conservation Award Winners

Dania Beach, Florida – February 20, 2018 – The International Game Fish Association (IGFA) recently announced its 2018 Conservation Award winners honoring IGFA representatives, individuals and corporations for their leadership on a range of angling-related conservation topics.

“Conservation efforts that protect our fisheries and waterways for future generations have been a cornerstone of the IGFA since 1939,” said Nehl Horton, IGFA President. “Conservation requires collaborative effort. Taking time to recognize those who work alongside our organization in these endeavors is critical to our mission and encourages more people and companies to get involved.”

Theresa Labriola and Bouncer Smith recognized with IGFA Individual Conservation Awards

Theresa Labriola is the Pacific Program Director for Wild Oceans – an organization that partnered with IGFA to pass the federal Billfish Conservation Act in the U.S. Labriola works diligently to remove drift gill nets from California waters; conducts significant outreach to the National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Fishery Management Council and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife; and has been a leader in building a coalition consisting of Coastal Conservation Association California, IGFA, American Sportfishing Association and Wild Oceans to address variety of conservation challenges.

“I work to make sure the voice of recreational anglers is heard above other interests,” said Labriola. “For me, it’s about pushing fisheries and commercial fleets to use cleaner, more sustainable gear and making sure the big fish we love to catch will be there in the future.”

Since he first started captaining boats at age 19 in South Florida, Bouncer Smith has been an institution in the offshore fishing world, serving as mentor to many anglers on issues of marine conservation and sharing his unmatched knowledge and infectious love of the sport. Smith has participated in numerous important tagging studies for saltwater species and is a staunch proponent of catch-and-release methods. Smith was one of the first captains in South Florida to start using circle hooks and has also participated in several scientific studies that documented their efficacy as a conservation tool. Furthermore, his influence in fishing clubs and with tournament organizers was crucial in the acceptance of circle hooks in all billfish tournaments in South Florida.

“I’m striving to give fishing to our children and grandchildren,” said Smith. “I want to thank the IGFA and its members for their daily efforts toward fisheries conservation.”

Steve Yatomi receives the IGFA Representative Conservation Award

For three years, Steve Yatomi has worked with the Apoteri Village in Guyana to develop a sustainable fishing eco tourism program that helps the village gather income and provide jobs for area youth. The project has raised more than \$384,000, led to five IGFA World Records on fly-fishing tackle; and expanded to include a stretch of fly fishing-only water that will create up to 100 additional jobs for villagers. Committed to the success of the operation, Yatomi spent 200 days on site this past year alone to help develop the project and is currently looking for volunteers interested in donating their time.

Patagonia earns the IGFA Corporate Conservation Award

Patagonia focuses on making products from materials that have low ecological footprints, including hemp and organic cotton as well as recycled polyester, nylon and wool. Since 1972, through its membership in “1% For The Planet®,” Patagonia has donated more than \$74 million to thousands of community-based groups working to create positive change for the planet in their own backyards and waterways.

To learn more about past Conservation Award winners, please visit www.igfa.org.

About the IGFA

Founded in 1939, the IGFA is a nonprofit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making, record keeping and recognition of

outstanding accomplishments in the field of angling. The IGFA also maintains world records in freshwater, saltwater, fly fishing and junior angler categories. IGFA has members in more than 100 countries.

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