

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2015 Law Enforcement of the Year Award

Nominee's Information:

Name: Edward (Matt) Webb

Position/Title: Officer

Agency/Department: FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement

Mailing Address: Naval Support Activity Building 432 Panama City Beach, FL

Phone: 850-767-0920

Email: Matt.Webb@MyFWC.com

Nominator's Information:

Name: Erasmus Castaneda

Position/Title: Lieutenant

Agency/Department: FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement

Mailing Address: Naval Support Activity Building 432 Panama City Beach, FL

Phone: 850-227-4217

Email: Erasmus.Castaneda@MyFWC.com

Please use no more than one page to respond to the following three items.
Attach your response to this cover sheet and mail to:

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
c/o Charlene Ponce/Phyllis Miranda
2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607

Nominations may also be submitted by fax to: 813-648-1711, or emailed to: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org.

1. Describe the nominee's current responsibilities.
2. Describe the nominee's significant contribution(s) to fisheries enforcement.
3. Describe specific qualities that make the nominee deserving of this award.

I hereby affirm that the information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that if any of the information provided is found to be inaccurate or untruthful, this nomination shall be removed from consideration for this award.

Nominator's Signature: *Erasmus Castaneda* Date: 1/29/2016

Officer Matt Webb
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Law Enforcement

If one were to ask FWC Officer Matt Webb where in the world he was most comfortable, he would likely answer "On patrol in the Gulf of Mexico." Webb is currently assigned to Gulf County, Florida and is responsible for patrolling a large geographic area, including active federal fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Even Webb would admit that although his duties take him inland to monitor hunting activities, on WMAs, inshore to perform freshwater enforcement actions and along the Intracoastal Waterway for patrols, he focuses his patrol efforts on offshore marine fisheries activities aboard his 29-foot offshore vessel. During the course of state and federal fishery season, Officer Webb checked 322 vessels with 1,036 fishermen, issued 16 federal warnings, issued or assisted with 29 federal fisheries citations (most of which concerned Red Snapper during the closed season) and dedicated 584 patrol hours to federal fisheries enforcement. Officer Webb holds Merchant Mariner's Credentials through the U.S. Coast Guard (Mariner ID # 3547934).

Officer Webb is responsible for planning, initiating and coordinating federal waters offshore patrols for his squad and has gained a reputation among his peers for his knowledge of federal fishery regulations and species identification. He is known throughout the region for his enthusiastic protection of the resource, and spends much of his time in the winter months working illegal gill netting cases. He has developed extensive cooperative partnerships with other FWC personnel and federal partners, including the FWC aviation unit and NOAA officers. Webb has an excellent working relationship with NOAA Law Enforcement Officer Pete Harwell and maintains constant communication with him.

Webb's educational efforts regarding federal fisheries management are extensive. He interacts with and educates fishermen on fishery requirements and rule changes, and is frequently asked to conduct public speaking engagements to discuss rule and season changes in an effort to keep the public informed. He sees educating the public about state and federal rules and regulations as one of the most important aspects of his job. A large portion of his resource work has been educating anglers on fish identification. Officer Webb uses his knowledge and critical thinking skills to competently serve the public, going above and beyond that which is expected of him at all times. Officer Webb is also frequently called upon to assist the FWC training academy in vessel operations for new recruits.

Officer Webb was the boat captain when a distress call came in of a pontoon boat taking on water in St. Joe Bay. Extreme weather had suddenly formed, with very high westerly winds causing 8-10 foot waves to develop in the bay. Officer Webb was able to safely operate his patrol vessel in this extremely dangerous situation to the vessel in distress. He then assisted three women, two small children and one infant into his vessel and took them safely back to shore.

Officer Webb is the definition of a team player, and is always willing to participate in all enforcement details. Webb is constantly studying marine fisheries laws so that he can remain knowledgeable when dealing with the public. His work ethic is unparalleled, and he is successful at the arrest of willful federal fishery violators, practices the safe navigation of vessel and crew, and frequently responds to offshore distress calls.

He is a kind and thoughtful person and is a fine example of a public service officer whose enforcement actions are typically guided by the C.O.P.S (Community Oriented Policing) philosophy. Officer Webb consistently demonstrates great commitment to his team, the FWC, and to our partnering agencies. This commitment and dedication has earned him the respect and appreciation of his peers. I am honored to endorse such an exceptional officer whose demeanor and professionalism speak loudly in regards to his quality of service and his dedication to his profession.