



# DR. HENRI VALLÈS

Dr. Vallès pursued a BSc in Biology at the University of Oviedo in Spain. He then taught biology for several years at the State University of Haiti, before pursuing an MSc in Natural Resource Management at the CERMES of the University of the West Indies (UWI) at Cave Hill. His MSc thesis focused on examining reef fish larval dynamics in a marine reserve network in the island of St Lucia and he continued that line of research for his PhD at McGill University in Canada by examining the dynamics of reef fish settlement in Barbados. After completing his PhD, he took some time off academia to work as a technical advisor to the Fisheries Department of Haiti in projects aimed at improving artisanal fisheries in Haiti. This last experience steered his interest beyond marine ecology and toward issues related to fisheries management in small developing island states. Henri joined the biology department of UWI at Cave Hill as a Lecturer in Ecology in 2011 and has been there ever since.

**MEET THE GCFI CHAIR NOMINEE**



# **DR. JOANNA PITT**

Joanna Pitt has been a Marine Resources Officer with the Bermuda Department of Environment and Natural Resources since 2008. She received her Ph.D. in Marine Biology from James Cook University, Australia, in 1997 and then worked at the Bermuda Biological Station for Research until moving into her present position. Joanna's research projects include baitfish populations and their fishery, invasive lionfish, and acoustic telemetry studies. Joanna has been an associate editor of Gulf and Caribbean Research since 2018. She was elected to the GCFI Board of Directors in 2015 and has taken an active role on the Student Awards and Sustainability Committees. Joanna has been very involved in helping to develop the program for the 73rd virtual GCFI meeting.

**MEET THE GCFI VICE CHAIR NOMINEE**



# DR. TERRY DONALDSON

Dr. Donaldson joined the GCFI Board of Directors in 2018 and serves on the Student Awards and Publications Committees. He is a Professor of Ichthyology at the University of Guam Marine Laboratory with several years' research experience with reef and insular freshwater fishes. Currently, he is a Principal Investigator and Project Director of the Guam-NSF Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Since 1 July 2020 he has been leading the Guam Ecosystems Collaboratorium for Corals and Oceans (GECCO) and is also the Science Investigator and co-PI of the NASA-EPSCoR GEOCORE grant for remote sensing and reef studies. He has attended every GCFI meeting and published in the Proceedings since the 2005 meeting (except for 2017). He is keenly interested in reef fish spawning aggregations and has served on the SCRFA Board of Directors for eight years and represented it in various capacities. He has an extensive record of service to societies, technical committees, the University, and other organizations, agencies and institutions, which is beneficial to GCFI and the Board.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**





# DR. DALILA ALDANA ARANDA

Dr. Aldana's research spans over 30 years in mollusk biology, aquaculture and the effect of climate change. After doctoral studies at the Bretagne Occidentale, France, Dr Aldana has been working at the marine resources department of Cinvestav IPN (Mérida) as a research scientist. She pioneered the study of reproduction and larvae aquaculture of conch mollusks in the Caribbean. Her primary research focus has been on problems of effect of environment on reproductive patterns of mollusk and in the early-life cycle of mollusks. Most recently, she has been working in collaboration with University of French West Indies to determine the potential impacts of Apicomplexa spp. on reproduction of conch and skeletogenesis of larvae as a results of global change and abundance of microplastics in marine organisms in the caribbean. She first joined the GCFI Board >25 years ago and was the first female Chair of GCFI in 2005. She is heavily involved in GCFI's Education and Historic and Diversity & Equality Committees and has been instrumental to the organizing of several GCFI conferences and outreach activities.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**



# **DR. ALFONSO AGUILAR-PERERA**

Dr. Aguilar-Perera is interested in marine conservation biology from the southern Gulf of Mexico and Mexican Caribbean, with emphasis on fish spawning aggregations, mostly those of groupers and snappers. He has also surveyed the progression of the lionfish invasion in the southern GOM describing associated socio-biological aspects. He has been awarded National Researcher Level 2 (by the National Council of Science and Technology, CONACYT by its Spanish acronym) in Mexico. In 2006, he received a tenure position in the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatan (UADY) where he is involved in scientific research and teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. Alfonso has served as the Chair of the GCFI Student Awards Committee for the last 4 years which facilitates bringing students from around the region to present their work and give them the opportunity to interact with scientists, and other stakeholders at the conference. He hopes to continue finding ways to foster student participation at GCFI and develop a bilingual initiative to especially encourage more spanish-speaking students to participate.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**



# ALEXANDER Q. FOGG

Alex received his BS degree from the University of South Carolina and a MS degree in Coastal Sciences from the University of Southern Mississippi for his work on northern Gulf of Mexico life history. He began his work career with NOAA in Pascagoula, Mississippi working on numerous Gulf of Mexico fisheries surveys following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Alex also served as the project manager for the Natural Resource Damage Assessment Artificial Reef Creation and Restoration Project with the FWC. Currently, Alex is the Coastal Resource Manager for Destin–Fort Walton Beach and is involved in a variety of projects such as sea turtle lighting initiatives, beach restoration, artificial reef creation and lionfish mitigation projects. Alex has been an enthusiastic participant and supporter of GCFI and has attended every meeting since 2013. He is the only student who completed the “trifecta” of receiving the Ron Schmied Award, a GCFI student travel award, and a GCFI Outstanding Student presentation award, and this was accomplished in three consecutive years. Alex’s commitment to GCFI is evident, as he will be the host of the GCFI74 in Fort Walton Beach, FL next November.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**



# DR. HOLDEN HARRIS

As a former dive instructor and commercial fisherman, Dr. Harris has a deep and complex relationship with the marine environment. His recent PhD work examined the ecological and socioeconomic conditions for developing a commercial fishery for invasive lionfish by better understanding population and community effects from lionfish removals and their removal efficiency, the emerging pathogen in lionfish, the potential for lionfish traps to control deepwater lionfish, and the bioeconomics of commercialized invasive species. As a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Florida Nature Coast Biological Station, his current focus areas include reducing fisheries discard mortality via gear innovation and management strategies, and developing ecosystem models to value coastal reef restoration. Holden was the 2019 recipient of GCFI's Student Academic Achievement Award and he brings dynamism, creative strategies and new ideas to the Board, which will be invaluable especially in current circumstances where there is a recognised need to adapt to new technologies and alter approaches.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**



# DR. MICHELLE SCHÄRER

Dr. Schärer holds a PhD in Marine Biology and collaborated with the Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program, Center for Interdisciplinary Coastal Studies, the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, NOAA and the WECAFC/FAO spawning aggregations working group, among others. She is currently a research scientist on projects with HJR Reefscaping in western Puerto Rico. She first joined the GCFI Board in 2016 and has been heavily involved in supporting GCFI program, communications, fisher engagement and ocean innovation initiatives. She looks forward to helping to ensure that the GCFI is a strong institution that can adapt to the changes that occur inside and outside our purview, by focusing on diversity, inclusion and ethics. She also helps translate multiple communications products to Spanish for the GCFI annual meeting and also throughout the year to improve communication and inclusion within the GCFI Community.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**



# BERTHA SIMMONS

Bertha Simmons, of Bluefields, Nicaragua, graduated as a social worker from the Central American University in Nicaragua and took postgraduate courses in conflict resolution at the European Peace University in Austria. She also conducted gender in development projects at Puntos de Encuentro, in Managua, Nicaragua. She received an MSc in Natural Resource Management at the University of the West Indies and is currently an Affiliate Member of the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations (BARNUFO), a CANARI mentor to BARNUFO and also a member of the Gender in Fisheries Team (GIFT). She has conducted research on women and men in the fishing industries of Barbados and the Caribbean. Since the inception of the GCFI Gender in Fisheries Special Poster Session four years ago, she has assisted in organizing and executing this event, and has contributed to the sessions displays by authoring and co-authoring posters.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**



# ERIC WADE

Eric Wade is an environmental social scientist at Oregon State University, originally from Belize. His research interests lie in human dimensions of conservation, environmental governance, and conservation and development. His current work explores the decision-making strategies and behaviors of small-scale fishers in the Caribbean and its link to informing sustainable fisheries management. He has worked in communities across Belize, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Panama. Eric has worked across sectors, including local non-governmental organizations, governmental departments, and regional bilateral agencies in the Caribbean. Eric will bring to GCFI's Board an injection of regional diversity. He has sound knowledge of Caribbean fisheries and his work experience comes from government (Belize Fisheries), non-governmental organizations (Oceana) and multilateral agencies (FAO and WECAFC). He has a strong track record in student representation and he brings a great enthusiasm to enhance GCFI's student-centered programs.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**



# WILLIAM L. MICHAELS

William Michael's career at NOAA provided him the opportunity to serve in various leadership roles with national and international interdisciplinary teams of dedicated professionals. His leadership evolved from Chief Scientist conducting marine ecosystem and technology research, to leading the agency's science quality assurance and revision of national legislative standards, to directing ocean technology innovations for improving the quality and timely delivery of science-based products and services. His efforts to mentor our next generation of professionals and build scientific capacity with emerging science and technology in data-limited regions has been rewarding. He previously served on the GCFI Board between 2014-2017 and has organized and convened several impactful GCFI special sessions and workshops. He values the GCFI community as his extended family and hopes to continue to work towards a common dedicated goal of protecting our planet's greatest resource, our living ocean.

**MEET THE GCFI BOARD NOMINEES**

