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**Bonefish & Tarpon Trust 8th International Science Symposium**

**November 7-8,2025 | Fort Lauderdale, Florida**

**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

The overall goal of BTT Symposia is to bring together internationally recognized marine scientists, resource managers, fishing guides, anglers, and educators to share information and learn from one another, and to translate science into conservation policy. The mix of attendees and diversity of presentations and expert panels is unique and empowering.

**2025 Symposium Theme: Spatial Conservation is Essential for the Future of the Flats Fishery**

The health of coastal ecosystems is rapidly declining due to coastal and upland development and increasing use of coastal waters for recreational and commercial purposes. This leads to increased pollution, modified watershed hydrology, and habitat alteration. As surface and groundwaters move from inland to the coasts, they flow through increasingly fragmented and contaminated natural landscapes bisected by agriculture, residential development, and urbanized areas. Development in coastal areas further degrades the ecosystems. The resulting habitat and water quality declines are negatively impacting our fisheries. The good news is that we have the tools to enact effective conservation measures to secure the future of our coastal fisheries.

Successful conservation of coastal ecosystems depends on implementing a landscape conservation approach that integrates upland, watershed, and coastal systems, as well as regional connectivity. Although we have many of the research and management components in place, we lack the integrated infrastructure to accomplish landscape conservation needed to achieve effective fisheries conservation.

The 8th International BTT Symposium will focus on presentations of collaborative Actionable Science that provides Actionable Knowledge for management and conservation measures within the general framework of a Landscape Conservation approach. The intent is to spur discussions of science-based proposals for management of flats fisheries, habitats, and water quality as part of a multidisciplinary, integrated approach with a focus on watershed and regional scales.

Presenters are tasked with sharing results of flats fishery-focused research, and demonstrating how research findings have been or should be applied to management.

Each presentation is allotted a 15-minute time period: 12 minutes for the presentation, 3 minutes for questions and transition to the next speaker.

A summary of symposium science sessions is at the end of this document.

Please share this call for abstracts with your colleagues.

**ABSTRACT SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Both oral presentations and posters will be accepted. When submitting an abstract, please indicate your preference for oral or poster presentation. Preferences for oral presentations will be accommodated subject to space limitations and the abstracts fulfilling the requirement for conservation applications.

**Submitting Your Abstract**

Abstracts must be submitted as a Word document attachment by email to Aaron Adams: aaron@bonefishtarpontrust.org.

**The email subject heading should be:** BTT Symposium Abstract – (lead author's last name)

**The filename should be:** BTT-Symposium-Abstract-(lead author's last name)

**Abstract Deadline:** May 15, 2025. Notice of decision on abstracts will be given by July 1, 2025.

**Abstract Format:** Please use the format below. Please use Courier 12pt font (this makes formatting the Symposium Program much easier).

**Example Abstract:**

Emigration of Juvenile Snook and Tarpon from a Mosquito Control Impoundment is enhanced through a Draw-Down of Water Level in summer

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Thousands of acres of marshland in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) have been impounded for mosquito control. Most of these impoundments are under Rotational Impoundment Management (RIM), in which culverts connecting to the IRL are closed in the summer to control mosquito reproduction, and opened Oct-May to allow water exchange. We conducted a quantitative assessment of the emigration of juvenile snook and tarpon from the Bee Gum Point Nature Preserve impoundment in Vero Beach, Florida. 284 snook and 70 tarpon were marked with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags and released back into the impoundment. Tag-detecting antennas around the culverts recorded minimal emigration when the culverts were open according to RIM in winter. Tagged juveniles remained trapped after the culverts were closed for the summer, but approached the antenna frequently. We therefore conducted an experimental summer draw down, opening culverts for 2 weeks in July. High rates of emigration were recorded for both juvenile snook and tarpon during the first two incoming tides of the draw down. This indicates that juvenile snook and tarpon are more likely to emigrate from impoundments during summer, when culverts are typically closed. These results suggest that impoundment management may be enhanced by including short term openings of culverts in summer to allow juveniles to emigrate, improving their value as nursery habitats.

Format preference: Oral

Presenter: Anthony Cianciotto

## EVENT INFORMATION

The website for the Symposium is BTT.org/Symposium. This page includes links to registration and hotel reservations.

The Symposium will take place at Hilton Ft. Lauderdale Marina.

Limited funds will be available for student and international travel. Please contact Aaron Adams if you would like to apply for assistance.

## Science Session Summaries

### Friday Morning: 8:30am – Noon. Science-based Conservation

In addition to standard assessment tools, modern fisheries management requires inclusion of environmental, spatial, and habitat data, as well as stakeholder engagement and alternative assessment methods, in the form of actionable science. Actionable Science is defined as "data, analyses, projections, or tools that can support decisions in natural resource management; it includes not only information, but also guidance on the appropriate use of that information." (Beier et al 2016). However, the actionable science must be conceived and conducted in a framework of an integrated approach. Presentations in this session will share examples of actionable science with direct applications to information gaps related to management needs.

### Friday Afternoon: 1:00pm – 5:00pm. Collaborative Science and Conservation

Modern science and conservation require public input and support in formulating research and conservation strategies. This is especially the case given that stresses to natural systems are increasing rapidly, outpacing the ability of management agencies to address them. Coproduction is a process that engages all stakeholders in a collaborative process to collectively address conservation challenges. Coproduction is defined as "collaboration among managers, scientists, and other stakeholders, who, after identifying specific decisions to be informed by science, jointly define the scope and context of the problem, research questions, methods, and outputs, make scientific inferences, and develop strategies for the appropriate use of science." (Beier et al. 2016). This session will be a mix of presentations, panel, and discussion among researchers, fishing guide associations, stakeholders, and resource managers.

### Saturday Morning: 8:30am – Noon. Tarpon Conservation

The Atlantic tarpon, revered as the Silver King, is among the most sought-after gamefish across the Western and Eastern Atlantic. Tarpon face numerous threats, including habitat loss, declining water quality, poor catch-and-release practices, and overfishing. Recognizing the need for management strategies that encompass the full scope of a tarpon's life cycle and their annual migrations as adults, Bonefish & Tarpon Trust and its partners have made large strides in understanding tarpon connectivity and developing targeted science-based management solutions. This session brings together leading scientists and legendary tarpon guides to address region-specific challenges and share innovative

conservation solutions, all aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of tarpon and contributing to the next Atlantic tarpon IUCN assessment.

**Saturday Afternoon: 1:00pm – 5:00pm. Landscape Conservation Applications**

The challenges of modern fisheries management and conservation require a paradigm shift toward a multidisciplinary, integrated approach that incorporates stakeholders, scientists, and resource managers. The new paradigm must break down the silo structure that has dominated natural resource management. This session will focus on the application of actionable knowledge to guide a landscape conservation approach for fisheries management. Actionable Knowledge is defined as: “the creative intersection between what we know and putting what we know into everyday practice” (Blood, 2006), and refers to “information that can be directly applied to make informed decisions or take specific actions.” (Bossé and Barès, 2022). The presentations in this session will provide examples of a science-based landscape conservation approach for flats fisheries management.