



Virginia Tech Fisheries: Maybe the Hokie-Pokie really is what it's all about

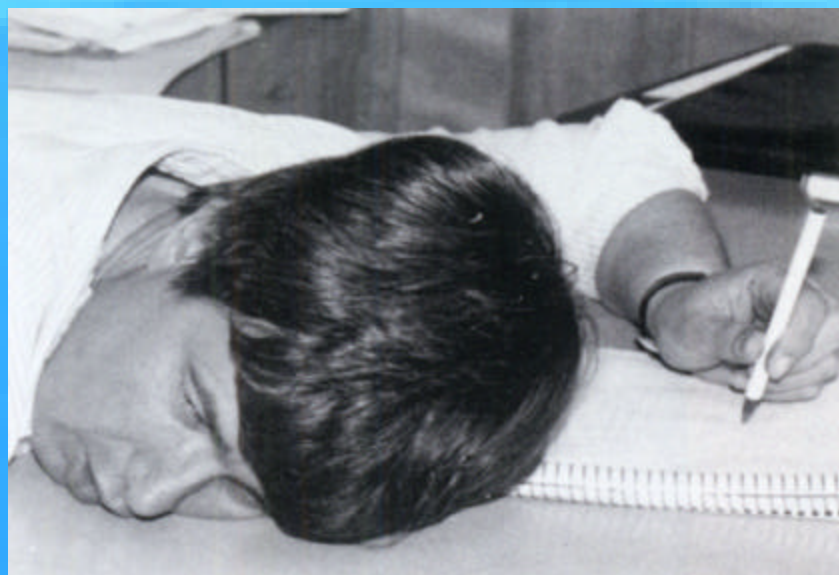
by Julie Boyles, Anne Hunter, John Kilpatrick, Todd Lenger, and Jamie Roberts



Dr. John J. Ney joined Virginia Tech in 1976. Dr. Ney received his B.S. in Zoology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1967 and moved directly into a Ph.D. program in Fishery Biology at the University of Minnesota in 1973. While at the University of Minnesota, Dr. Ney studied under Dr. Lloyd Smith, student of Carl Hubbs, who was a student of David Starr Jordan. In addition to mentoring numerous students over his career, he has served on the Southern Division AFS reservoir committee, as president of the Education Section of American Fisheries Society, and as president of the Environmental Sciences Section of the Virginia Academy of Sciences. He served for 23 years as a book reviewer for the American Fisheries Society and received the SDAFS Outstanding Achievement Award.



As a child, Dr. Ney developed a passion for fisheries work. His experience volunteering with a district fish biologist in "God's Country" (Wisconsin) led Dr. Ney to pursue a career in sport fish management on lakes and reservoirs. Although Dr. Ney had always wanted to work as a state fisheries biologist, he eventually decided that a career in academia would allow more time for hunting and fishing (see photograph of Dr. Ney while reviewing yet another paper and missing yet another fishing trip).



Dr. Ney's research interests include applied ecology of fishes, trophic dynamics, and reservoir management. Some of Dr. Ney's recent research has focused on the suitability of alewives as forage fish and the ecology of stocked predator fishes. He is currently working with two graduate students on the ecology of reservoir striped bass and hybrid striped bass in a Virginia reservoir. Dr. Ney believes that sport fish management will involve people management catching up with fishery management. He believes that one of the biggest challenges for current and upcoming fisheries managers will be to deal with the impacts of global warming and the associated lessening of coolwater reservoir habitat.

- 1872 – Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, later to become Virginia Tech, established in Blacksburg
- 1935 – First Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit in the country established at VT, at suggestion of "Ding" Darling
- 1959 – Wildlife and Forestry Department splits from Department of Biology
- 1964 – Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit established at VT, with Dr. Kenneth Cummings as Unit Leader Fisheries program established
- 1972 – Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is created from Wildlife and Forestry
- 1973 – Virginia Tech Chapter receives its charter from AFS
- 1978 – Dr. Richard Neves becomes Unit Leader of Fisheries Coop Unit, joins Department of F&W faculty Dr. Donald Orth joins faculty
- 1983 – First Annual Mudbass carp fishing tournament held at VT's duckpond; now in its 19th year
- 1985 – Fisheries and Wildlife Coop Units combined
- 1986 – VTAFS receives Southern Division "Outstanding Chapter Award"
- 1987 – U.S. Forest Service Coldwater Fisheries Research Unit joins Department, led by Dr. Andrew Dolloff
- 1988 – Dr. Paul Angermeier becomes first Assistant Fisheries Leader of Coop Unit
- 1989 – Dr. Larry Nielson becomes Department Head (now Dean at NC State)
- 1991 – VTAFS receives Southern Division "Outstanding Chapter Award"
- 1994 – Dr. Brian Murphy becomes Department Head
- 1999 – VTAFS receives Southern Division "Outstanding Chapter Award"
- 2000 – VTAFS receives parent society "Outstanding Chapter Award" Dr. Orth becomes Department Head
- 2001 – VTAFS receives Parent Society "Special Recognition Award"



The Virginia Tech Student Chapter of the American Fisheries Society was founded in 1972. The chapter conducts a variety of professional, educational, and social activities providing opportunities for members to strengthen their skills and contribute to the fisheries profession. Members strive to promote the educational, scientific, and technological advancement of all branches of fisheries science.

The Southern Division of AFS has recognized the Chapter as Outstanding Chapter of the Year four times. VTAFS also received the Parent Society's Outstanding Chapter recognition in 2000 and a special recognition award in 2001.

This poster recognizes the people involved with making our fisheries program at Virginia Tech a great place to study and grow professionally.



VT Researchers Investigate Scene of Suspected Cow Tipping Incident



Tim Copeland Demonstrates the Bass-O-Matic at Outreach Event



Dr. Richard (Dick) J. Neves joined Virginia Tech in 1978 as the Assistant Unit Leader of the Virginia Cooperative Fishery Research Unit, and in 1985 he became the Unit Leader. Dr. Neves also serves as a Professor at Virginia Tech. He has authored over 100 journal articles, more than 200 reports, recovery plans, and popular articles on freshwater mussels. He is a co-author on the National Strategy for the Conservation of Native Freshwater Mussels. Dr. Neves' efforts to conserve freshwater mussels have been recognized through The Nature Conservancy's Conservationist of the Year (1993), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Award for Outstanding Science (1993), and the American Fisheries Society Distinguished Service Award (1998).

Dr. Neves grew up in New Bedford, Massachusetts where he aspired to become a marine biologist. While uncertain if David Starr Jordan can be found in his academic family tree, his influential mentors included Richard Gregory at the University of Maine, where he received his M.S. in 1973, and Roger Reed at the University of Massachusetts where he received his Ph.D. in 1977.

The most valuable aspect of entering the halls of Cheatham at the time he did was that all of the faculty were about the same age and at the same place in their careers. Thus, there were no prima donnas to fight, and there was no objection to his diversifying into the non-traditional fisheries arena of freshwater mussels.

As for the future of fisheries, Dr. Neves predicts that there will be much more competition for water resources, particularly between aquatic biota and human use.

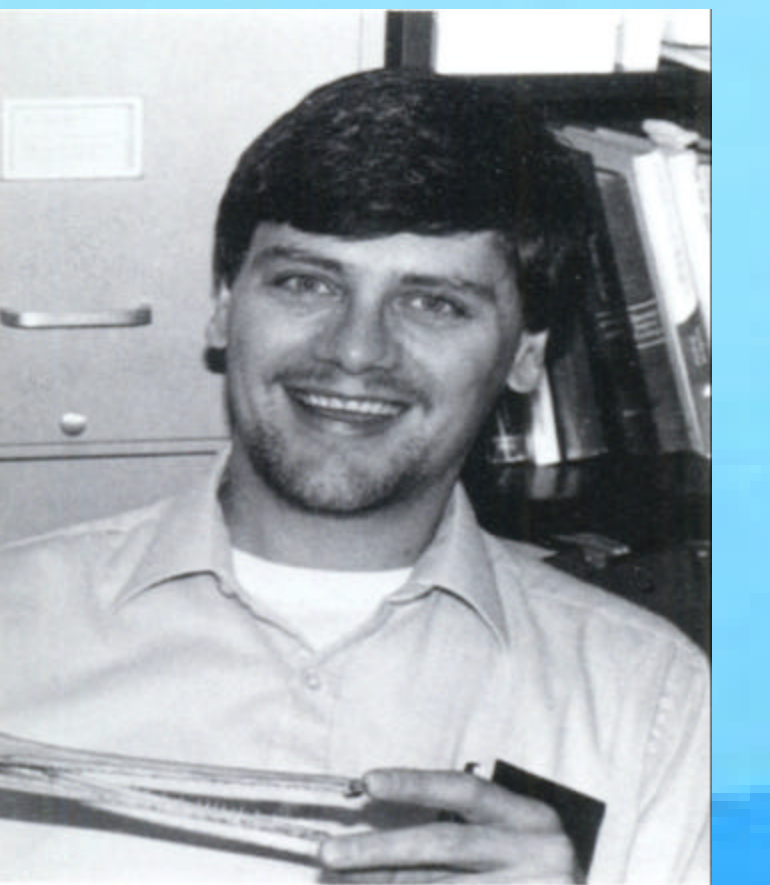


Dr. Donald J. Orth, a member of the Virginia Tech faculty since September of 1980, became the Head of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife in the fall of 2000. Dr. Orth has authored over 50 publications, and has received numerous awards, including the Certificate of Teaching Excellence in 1999, the Outstanding Faculty Award in 1998, and the W.F. Thompson Award from the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists in 1993.

Dr. Orth grew up in Chicago, where at age 16 he made the decision to become an ichthyologist. His initial aspirations were to live on a lake and manage lake fish. However, after completing his Bachelor's degree at Eastern Illinois University, and his Master's and PhD degrees at Oklahoma State University, he was "coerced" into taking a position as an assistant professor at Virginia Tech.

Although Dr. Orth started his graduate career with Bob Summerfelt, his most influential mentor was Eugene Maughn, with whom he finished his master's degree and PhD. Upon his arrival in Blacksburg, he encountered several colorful colleagues, some of whom are still at Tech to this day. The cast of characters included Dr.'s Lou Helfrich, Dick Neves, and John Ney, who remain in the department, as well as Dr. Larry Nielson, who is now Dean of the College of Natural Resources at N.C. State. Although Dr. Orth admits that he cannot trace his roots back to David Starr Jordan, he maintains that he has re-sampled some sites that Jordan sampled in the Roanoke River.

As for the future of fisheries, Dr. Orth predicts that there will continue to be an integration of diverse disciplines feeding the decision making process. Not only will there be fisheries managers but also ecologists, wildlife biologists, watershed managers, and members of the community involved in decisions. Dr. Orth hopes that students will leave Virginia Tech not only with the skills needed to educate the community about aquatic resources, but also with the ability to secure the money and support to do so.



Stroubles Creek flows beneath the VT campus and then through agricultural fields on its way to the New River. VTAFS has conducted several activities on Stroubles over the past 12 years to improve its biological condition. Surveys of the fish and invertebrate communities have shed light on the ecological integrity of the campus stream reach. VTAFS's restoration of one reach of Stroubles Creek has yielded substantial habitat and aesthetic improvements (before/after photos above).



Over the past 19 years, VTAFS has used its Annual Mudbass Tournament to introduce young anglers to the joys of fishing. Although carp (and the kids who catch them) are the stars of the show, prizes are awarded for all types and sizes of fish that might be caught. The event takes place at The Duckpond on the VT campus, and has become a family favorite in the New River Valley area.