

# *NYSG Fellow Is Recognized With Prestigious Award*



**Kathy Mills (left) receives her award from Dr. Barbara Knuth at the September 2005 AFS annual meeting. Photo by Dave Partee, Alaska Sea Grant**

**Kathy Mills**, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University and a current NMFS-Sea Grant Population Dynamics Fellow, was selected as the runner-up for the American Fisheries Society's (AFS) J. Frances Allen Scholarship. Established in 1986 to honor J. Frances Allen who pioneered women's involvement in the field of fisheries, this yearly award goes to a female Ph.D student and serves to encourage women to become fisheries professionals.

Mills' dissertation research focuses on ecosystem-based management of marine fisheries in the Gulf of Maine. One aspect of her research seeks to identify useful indicators for tracking the status of the ecosystem and to develop ways to link these indicators to management decision-making. Another component of her research evaluates suitable governance approaches for implementing ecosystem-based management in the Gulf of Maine. Her work is conducted in conjunction with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, where she is mentored by **Dr. Wendy Gabriel**.

Her Cornell advisor, **Dr. Patrick Sullivan**, says "Kathy's work brings together two very challenging and seemingly distinct topics, namely ecosystem indicators and marine governance. But by ascertaining the basics of each and seeking a

conceptual bridge between them, she is establishing the groundwork for the next step in fisheries management."

Mills received her BA in environmental science and political science from Duke University and her MS in natural resources from Cornell University where she studied fish community structure in tidal wetlands and became a 1998 Hudson River National Estuaries Research Reserve/Sea Grant Fellow. NYSG Board of Governors member, **Dr. Mark Bain**, is currently Mills' co-advisor with Dr. Patrick Sullivan; both have done research funded by NYSG. Says Bain: "Kathy's research is ground breaking in its scope and rigor—spanning fish biology, oceanography, policy making, and coastal communities and economies. NYSG paved the way for this dissertation by supporting Ms. Mills past work from Hudson River wetlands to the US Senate's Commerce Committee."

Mills was also NYSG's sponsored Knauss Fellow in 2001 when she worked in the US Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, and Fisheries Office and handled many marine habitat issues, including marine protected areas (see *Coastlines*, Fall '01 issue).

Another NYSG researcher of long standing and the past president of AFS, **Dr. Barbara Knuth**, advises the governance component of Mills' dissertation. Says Knuth: "Kathy is the epitome of student excellence and professionalism that the Sea Grant program seeks to nurture. Her experience as a Knauss Fellow demonstrated her leadership potential. Her dissertation research shows clearly her abilities to tackle natural resource management challenges with an eye toward interdisciplinary solutions, an approach that will be critical for addressing fisheries, coastal, and ocean management issues into the future."

Upon completion of her dissertation, Mills plans to continue working on matters related to ecosystem-based management in the Gulf of Maine. She hopes to pursue research with management implications and to play an active role in integrating scientific results into decision-making processes, either through a position in government or academia.

— **Barbara A. Branca**