

**ANNUAL MEETING, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, 22 APRIL 2010  
CURTAILING ILLEGAL FISH STOCKING RESOLUTION OF THE  
WESTERN DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY (WDAFS)**

WHEREAS, fisheries professionals have a public trust responsibility to conserve and protect all aquatic wildlife and their habitats for future generations; and

WHEREAS, deliberate, unauthorized and illegal release (stocking) of fish and other aquatic animals is adversely altering aquatic resources; and

WHEREAS, unauthorized stocking bypasses regulatory processes necessary to prevent the introduction of nonnative, invasive or pathogenic organisms; and

WHEREAS, illegal stocking often impedes ongoing management and restoration efforts, many times at great expense in terms of professional time and public resources; and

WHEREAS, this activity can have enormous and unmitigatable economic and ecological impacts; and

WHEREAS, illegal stocking continues in spite of ongoing education and regulatory efforts; and

WHEREAS, current approaches are not providing adequate protection for aquatic wildlife and their habitats; and

WHEREAS, the American Fisheries Society (AFS) is the leading organization of fisheries professionals; now,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the WDAFS urges fisheries management agencies to immediately and aggressively expand their current efforts and adopt new regulatory, education and outreach, and management strategies to curtail illegal stocking. Such policies and strategies can include:

- a. improving natural resource agency, law enforcement and judicial professionals' understanding and appreciation of the environmental harm and societal costs illegal stocking can inflict;
- b. adopting uniformly strict regulations and severe penalties for illegal stocking;
- c. seeking creative solutions to increase funding for witness rewards, such as an international reward pool and tip hotline;
- d. considering proactive policies to deter illegal stocking such as a priori must-kill regulations and prohibitions on holding live fish;
- e. employing diverse media to repeat a balanced, well-articulated educational message about illegal stocking over many channels; and
- f. responding appropriately when illegal stocking occurs, with eradication/suppression, fishery closure, or suspension of stocking and special regulations on other species.