



## **Dennis Krusac USDA Forest Service Employee**

### **2022 C.W. Watson Award Recipient**

The C.W. Watson Award is the most prestigious award given by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This award was established in 1964 to recognize individuals who have contributed the most to fish and wildlife conservation. The 2022 winner of the award, Dennis Krusac, endangered species specialist with the USDA Forest Service in Atlanta, GA, has maintained the tradition of conservation excellence in the Southeast for his entire 43-year career. Dennis stood out for his development of innovative conservation and education programs, managing habitat for many species in the Southeast, and facilitating partnerships and support for the work of the USDA Forest Service throughout his career.



Pictured left to right: J.D. Strong, SEAFWA Awards Committee Chairman, Lisa Muller, C.W. Watson Award Committee Chairwoman, Dennis Krusac, 2022 C.W. Watson Award recipient, and Eric Sutton, President of SEAFWA.

Dennis developed innovative strategies for red-cockaded woodpecker management while also allowing for production of forest products. Dennis managed the red-cockaded woodpecker translocation program and served on the recovery team since 2000. He worked on bat conservation and provided leadership and guidance to multi-agency partnerships to promote bats on all land ownership types. He helped create the first BioBlitz in the nation to facilitate collection of bat baseline data needed for management on southern forests. He has been instrumental in species recovery plans and restoration for the rusty-patched bumble bee, Louisiana pine snake and promoted reintroduction of the peregrine falcon and bald eagle. Dennis also worked on creating early successional habitat for ruffed grouse and wild turkeys, acquisition of conservation lands for other species, and promoting fishing opportunities for family friendly recreation.

"I'm honored and humbled to have received the C.W. Watson award. I share it with everyone I have had the pleasure of working with the past 43 years, said Dennis Krusac, 2022 C.W. Watson Award recipient. "Everything of significance that I accomplished in my career was done through partnerships. When you think about it, everything we have accomplished as a conservation community has been done through partnerships, and that's important for the next generation of wildlife and fisheries professional to understand."

Dennis has clearly had a huge impact on conservation of species and habitats across the Southeast but also education and outreach about natural resources to urban and underserved communities. Ken Arney who nominated Dennis for the award wrote, "He has served his agency and community tirelessly in making a difference for urban and minority youth. He has applied humility, passion, commitment, and innovation in working with a wide range of diverse groups throughout the Atlanta metro area to make a positive change in the lives of others." Much of this educational programming was done outside of his regular work responsibilities.

Dennis continues to work for fish and wildlife species and habitats across the Southeast. He shares his passion by connecting people with the importance of nature. The C.W. Watson Award recognizes Dennis Krusac for his impactful and distinguished service.

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