BIOGRAPHY

DR. RICHARD S. APPELDOORN, PH.D.

Born and raised in New Jersey, I developed an interest in science through my father and a series of excellent teachers. Like many others I was fascinated by the books and films of Jacques Cousteau, and it was my father who suggested I pursue studies in marine science. Sounded good to me. I did my undergraduate degree at Rutgers University, where I was fortunate to hook up with Dr. Hal Haskins for 2 summers working first with oysters in Delaware Bay and then surf clams off the New Jersey coast. This experience locked me into my first 2 loves: mollusks and populations. I went on to pursue these at the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island under the influential tutelage of Dr. Saul Saba. While this definitely helped develop my limited mathematical and statistical skills, I did stray off the path of strict quantitative stock assessment and rather developed an interest in population biology and life—history strategies. This combination provided the solid foundation I subsequently employed throughout my career.

Shortly after my doctorate, in 1981, I landed a faculty position in fisheries biology in the Department of Marine Sciences, University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez. The Magueyes Island Marine Laboratory was an excellent location for pursuing field studies, and there I stumbled into a situation where there was an immediate need of someone that could conduct field experiments with laboratory—reared queen conch. Thus, I started my long—term efforts studying the biology, fishery and management of this important and iconic gastropod. This also led to meeting Ilse, my wife and partner for almost 30 years. Through my early students, I also developed at interest in the ecology of grunts, a wonderful suite of species that are an excellent model for reef fishes, and this eventually led to my interests and work in connectivity and MPA function and design. Along the way, due to my background in applied science and fisheries management, I was asked to help lead a number of life—defining programs. The first was a 3—week submersible—based survey of deep resources to over 800 m using the Johnson Sea—Link. The second was the Coral Reef Ecosystems Studies (CRES) program. Managing this NOAA funded 5—year, multimillion dollar program was educational, highlighting how limited my management skills were for a project so large. However, learn I did, and this led to 2 follow—up collaborative programs with NOAA: the Caribbean Coral Reef Institute, set up to provide science advice to local management agencies, and the Deep CRES program, to conduct pioneering studies of mesophotic coral ecosystems down to 100 m. While not among those trained to use mixed—gas rebreathers, I did get to pilot the ROV at sites throughout the US Caribbean. I have had the pleasure of training over 40 MS and PhD students, almost all of whom are professionally active within the region in research, education or management. Additionally, I have advised numerous agencies, both local and international, in aspects of fisheries management, including my current position as the Chair of the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council. Although I have recently retired from my faculty position, I seem to have problems extracting myself, as I am still advising my few remaining students and working on proposals and manuscripts.