

# HELPING TO MAINTAIN HEALTHY FISH STOCKS

The NYS Legislature committed \$1.5 million in the budget that was signed by Governor Paterson in Spring 2008 to continue research into pathogen-bearing organisms that threaten fisheries in waters around New York.

Declines in New York's major fisheries in the past two decades can be attributed to several different microorganisms: brown tide algae, QPX, MSX, *Perkinsus* (these two are the major pathogens of historically-abundant bivalves in NY and other parts of the northeast), *Paramoeba*, and a wide range of bacteria and viruses. All but brown tide are considered pathogens. NYS committed funds in 2000 to establish a diagnostic and fish pathology research facility, following a system-wide mortality event of American lobster stocks in Long Island Sound. Since then, the Marine Animal Disease Lab (MADL), which is located at the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (SoMAS) of Stony Brook University, operates as a partnership among SoMAS, Cornell University, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York Sea Grant.

This most recent financial commitment from the Legislature will facilitate New York Sea Grant's work

Dr. Bassem Allam, fish pathologist at the Marine Animal Disease Laboratory (foreground), and Sea Grant Scholar Qianqian Liu conduct experiments on hard clams, *Mercenaria mercenaria*, as part of Sea Grant's funded QPX research.

Photo by Barbara A. Branca



with MADL to increase outreach to get the results out to the fishing community.

**Antoinette Clemetson**, NYSG Fisheries Extension Specialist, will be working closely with fish pathologists **Drs. Bassem Allam** and **Mark Fast** to educate anglers, commercial fishers and the general public, about common pathogens and teach the best practices to minimize the spread of undesirable pathogens. Special courses will be developed to teach simple techniques to live bait traders to minimize cross contamination of their products, which can be disastrous under circumstances of eminent disease outbreaks.

This outreach service will simplify communications between the fish pathologists and commercial fishers who are in the best position to report abnormalities in fisheries.

— **Antoinette Clemetson**

## SCHOLAR DI LIBERTO WINS MATTICE TRAVEL AWARD

In October 2008, **Thomas Di Liberto**, a Master's candidate at Stony Brook University's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (SoMAS) won the Mattice Sea Grant Scholar Travel Award.

Di Liberto, a Cornell University graduate, is doing his graduate work under **Dr. Brian Colle** of the Stony Brook Storm Surge Team (see page 5). For his Master's thesis, Di Liberto focused on how accurately the new model predicts weather conditions during major storms such as Hurricane Gloria that struck Long Island in 1985. He will use these funds to travel to Phoenix, Arizona where he will present the verification of the Stony Brook Storm Surge Model at the 89th Annual Meeting of the American Meteorological Society in January 2009.

— **Barbara A. Branca**



**Dr. Jack Mattice**, former Director of NYSG (left), presents the Mattice Sea Grant Scholar Travel Award to graduate student **Thomas Di Liberto** of Stony Brook University's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences.

Photo by Barbara A. Branca

Comments