H.J. Walker has been the Collection Manager of the world renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography Marine Vertebrate Collection (MVC) for 29 years. Although his primary duties include the care and maintenance of the Collection, a huge assemblage of 2.5 million fish specimens representing 5,500 species, he has consistently extended his skills and enthusiasm beyond expectations. He loves his work in general, and his particular passion is ichthyological (fish) research. Although he does not hold a Ph.D. and is not a Principal Investigator, he has published a remarkable number of papers (16) and has been the senior (first) author on ten of these publications. Despite his many years in service to the University, his passion has not waned. He is currently finishing a paper (with all three of us) to describe the fish community at a remote island group in Mexico, and he is preparing a teaching manual for undergraduate and graduate students in ichthyology classes around North America (with two of us). Furthermore, he has described ten species of fish previously unknown to science and is responsible for discovering and describing the world's smallest vertebrate!

H.J. has given presentations at a number of scientific meetings and is a member of two scientific societies. He has attended over twenty-five scientific meetings to further his knowledge of fishes and is an active participant on two committees. His expertise is well known in the ichthyological community, and he has been an expert peer reviewer on over twenty papers for editors of six different journals, in addition to routinely reviewing papers for us and for his other colleagues here at SIO. He also was elected to the Board of Governors of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, a great honor for any scientist and particularly notable for someone without a Ph.D., an honor that has very rarely been given.

H.J.'s presence in his professional community can be further understood by the recent declaration (by one of his peers) of a second species, new to science, to bear his name.

H.J.'s scientific accomplishments are only overshadowed by his commitment to university life and education here at SIO. Many years ago, H.J. established the DNA tissue collection at the MVC. At the time, it represented one of the first such archives in the United States, and it has since grown to be one of the most comprehensive tissue collections in the world and now receives many requests for collaboration each year from researchers around the world.

Similarly, within the UCSD community, H.J. conceived a plan and worked with the SIO Development Office a number of years ago to allow employees to make donations to SIO through direct deductions from their paychecks. This program continues to this day and successfully raises money for institutional and student support. H.J. has devoted countless hours to SIO outreach, and has given tours of the MVC to literally thousands of people. His enthusiasm for showing everyone the world of fishes is well known and visitors leave the collection both educated and entertained. He also has mentored a number of graduate and undergraduate students in fish identification and systematics with this same inspired joy, and one student even dedicated his Master’s Degree thesis to H.J.

In his home community, H.J. was elected to the Encinitas Union School District Board of Trustees and was a member of the Traffic Commission for the city, and for a number of years, H.J. served as vice-president or treasurer of his homeowners association.

H.J. embodies the spirit of UCSD, and he certainly has wholeheartedly supported its dual mission of research and education. We are excited and honored to nominate H.J. Walker as an exemplary staff employee of the year.