

**Student Name and Class Year:** Albertha Ladina '17

**Internship dates:** Summer 2016

**Sponsoring Agency:** Oceana

**Location:** Monterey, California

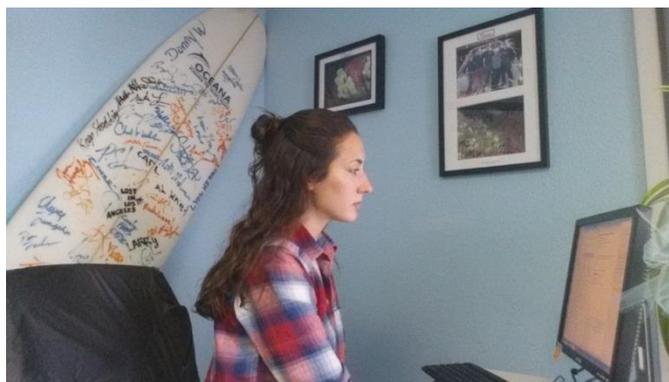
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This past summer, I was fortunate enough to spend nine weeks at Oceana's Monterey office as a Pacific Habitat Communications Intern. My internship focused on the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) campaign, an effort to protect important seafloor habitats from bottom trawling- a commercial fishing practice that inflicts serious damage to the vulnerable seafloor.

Oceana is an international advocacy organization with a mission to protect and restore the world's oceans. They have offices all over the world to best accomplish their global-scale efforts of ocean conservation, which they do so by winning strategic, goal-oriented, science-based campaigns. One of these campaigns is the protection of essential fish habitat-living seafloor ecosystems (containing structures like corals and sponges) that support commercially and recreationally important fish species. The biggest threat to these ecosystems is bottom trawling, which disturbs existing ecosystems by tearing off geological and biological structures that frame the habitat, displacing boulders, and harming bottom-dwelling organisms. Currently, the Pacific Fishery Management Council- a federal fishery management body- is considering whether to increase protections for new habitats or to reduce the number and expanse of current protected areas by November 2016.

At Oceana, my role was to provide communication support for public and media outreach for the EFH campaign. I was responsible for supporting the development and execution of public and media outreach materials- such as blogs, fact sheets, campaign stickers, and social media posts- that would help secure a decision by federal fishery managers to maintain and even expand seafloor protections off the U.S.



West Coast. I wrote about the EFH campaign, recent deep sea species discoveries, methane seeps, and the recreational fishery in California in an effort to encourage people to support the campaign. I also worked on general office tasks, such as inquiring companies about campaign material quotas, summarizing scientific papers, and taking notes at conferences. I reported to

Ashley Blacow, Oceana's Pacific Policy and Communications Manager, who worked with me to develop the best materials for media and public outreach. Working so closely with Ashley allowed me to significantly develop my writing and science communication abilities- skills that I think will genuinely help me in any future career involving Environmental science or policy.

Aside from producing public outreach and media deliverables, I also had the opportunity to attend a few conferences and meetings on fisheries issues. One of the more provocative meetings I attended was the Marine Resource Commission meeting in Petaluma, California. At this open public meeting, three commission members facilitated an all-day discussion on current fishery issues that included input from state department employees, nonprofits, independent fishermen, and industry representatives. It was incredibly interesting to watch people from different backgrounds defend their particular stances on fisheries issues. It was particularly exciting to see scientists explain to the commissioners why the abalone fishery was in decline and watch as an independent fisherman actively argued against the presented data.

Surprisingly and interestingly enough, my role varied throughout the summer as I took on tasks that weren't initially part of my job description. During my first week as an intern, Geoff Shester- Oceana's California Campaign Director- asked me to assist him with conducting an aerial survey counting the number and spatial distribution of crab traps over Monterey Bay- an expedition that would help begin to assess the co-occurrence between fishing traps and large whales. Words cannot express how spectacular it felt to fly 1000 feet above the scenic Monterey peninsula to assist with this one-of-a-kind project.



Another task that I took on was creating designs and images through Microsoft PowerPoint. A few weeks into my internship, I learned that I was really interested in using my research to create visual images for Oceana's informational blogs and outreach. For example, as a supplement to my blog on methane seeps, I designed and created a schematic to guide people in understanding how a deep-sea methane seep environment works. It was wonderful to learn and develop such an interesting and useful professional skill.

This internship provided me with some valuable insight into marine communication and policy, a field that is so crucial in communicating fishery issues to stakeholders and making important marine management decisions. I truly appreciate having had the opportunity to work with Oceana this summer and develop these valuable communication skills, and am so grateful to Colby's Environmental Studies department for making it possible for me to have this experience.