

Master's Student Opportunity at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, CA to understand the impacts of parrotfish grazing in the Caribbean. The Ruttenberg Lab at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (<http://www.marine.calpoly.edu/community/faculty/benjamin-ruttenberg.php>) seeks a master's student to work on a project examining the impacts of parrotfish grazing in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. The student will be based in San Luis Obispo, CA, on the California Central Coast, with some travel to St. Croix required. The team also includes collaborators based in Santa Barbara (UCSB and SB City College). More information about the Cal Poly Biology Graduate Program is available here: <http://bio.calpoly.edu/content/grad-degrees>

The primary goals of the project are to understand the grazing impacts of different species and size classes of parrotfish on benthic communities (including algae and corals) in St. Croix, including some observational and experimental field work and analyses of grazing videos. In addition, there will be opportunities to explore questions related to these issues.

Funding for the project includes tuition, costs related to field work, and the student will be able to obtain a stipend as a teaching assistant/lab instructor in the Biology Department at Cal Poly.

This is a specific project, and therefore the ideal student would have many/all of the following qualifications:

1. Knowledge of Caribbean fauna, including fish (primarily parrotfish), algae, and corals.
2. Research dive certification and/or extensive dive experience, ideally in the Caribbean.
3. Experience conducting field work in remote locations from small boats.
4. Experience managing students/assistants.
5. Minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA (higher strongly preferred).
6. Availability to participate in fieldwork in St. Croix during June/July 2015.

Interested candidates should email Dr. Benjamin Ruttenberg with a brief description of his/her qualifications, interest in the Cal Poly MS program, and the project, as well as a short CV. Application deadline for Cal Poly is Feb 1.