

Whale and Dolphin Conservation, North America (NA), located in Plymouth, Massachusetts, offers internships and field volunteer positions, providing research, policy, education and administration experience in working for an international non-profit organization. We are currently accepting applications for spring and summer 2015 positions, which begin as early as April 1st. The deadline to submit an application for spring/summer positions is Monday, February 2nd.

The positions are offered to qualified applicants throughout the year, allowing each participant/student to customize their learning experience based on their interest, skill set, and availability. Successful applicants will become proficient at field data collection, educational outreach, and conservation of marine mammals. Interns will also complete a focused project furthering professional development

Background to the program

The focus of the WDC internship/volunteer program is to give participants exposure to all aspects of working with a conservation non-profit organization. Successful candidates are tasked with everything from field research to office administration. All interns gain experience with public speaking by interacting with passengers aboard whale watching vessels, participating in school talks and other public outreach events. Other potential opportunities include writing blogs, water sampling, attending workshops/conferences, and responding to stranded animals, though these are not guaranteed opportunities. This program exposes interns to real world experiences that will help them develop the skills and understanding needed to succeed in the field of marine mammal conservation and research. Participants will gain an in-depth perspective of this field and a better understanding of where their interests lie. Through this internship, a number of skills are developed including analytical, organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills.

As part of the field work experience, interns will learn species identification, behavioral sequencing, data collection and photo identification research techniques on marine mammals in the Gulf of Maine. They will also have the opportunity to go out on commercial whale watching boats several times a week (field season is April through October) to photograph and record sightings of humpback, finback, and minke whales, as well as other notable marine wildlife. The frequency of fieldwork is weather dependent. Days not in the field will be spent at the office uploading photos and data into our photo identification database or working on any projects that might be assigned.

Based on time of year and the interest level of successful applicants, the intern program may include all or some portion of the following:

Education and Outreach

- Whale Watch Naturalist Training
- Outreach to local schools and the general public
- Assisting with and learning about the importance of ecotourism and best practices
- Writing blogs about work conducted or current events while interning with WDC
- Attendance at conferences and meetings

Research

- Cataloging individually identifiable humpback and finback whales

- Collection of marine mammal sightings and distributional data in the Southern Gulf of Maine
- Researching and submitting grant applications
- Analyzing body condition of marine mammals through scarring and skin condition
- Preparing a report of the previous season's whale sightings with historical analysis, risk issues and the impact of cumulative developmental threats
- Attendance and participation in stranding training and events

Conservation

- Supporting WDC personnel at key conservation meetings
- Literature research for written and oral comments submitted to federal agencies

At the end of the program our hope is that interns will be able to leave with a comprehensive understanding of both the exciting and routine aspects of what it takes to research and conserve marine mammals. More information can be found at whales.org.

There is no fee or compensation for the internship/volunteer positions. Participants must arrange for their own transportation to and from Plymouth and provide their own food. Limited housing with a shared bedroom is available on site for a monthly fee of \$300, which is strictly to offset the cost of housing. Assistance can be provided in finding alternate housing at the request of the applicant, and those that can provide their own housing are encouraged to apply.

WDC is willing to help qualified students obtain credits for the program through their college or university. The program requires a minimum commitment of 3 months, with the possibility of extending the term on a case-by-case basis. International applicants interested in the internship program must be able to secure their own travel Visa and other required documentation.

Candidate Requirements

- Fluency in English.
- Must be 18 years or older (preference given to students matriculated in or recently graduated from appropriate graduate or under graduate degree programs.)
- Be able to show proof of valid health insurance.
- Act effectively as a member of a close-knit team.
- Be open to long days in the field or office.
- Ability to work on sea going vessels for long hours that may require physical labor.
- Good computer skills – familiarity with operating PCs and MACs.
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills.
- Familiarity with literature research protocols is beneficial.

- Ability to function well under pressure.
- Must be comfortable speaking in front of groups of people of all ages and able to handle unanticipated situations.
- Familiarity with DSLR camera, GPS equipment is preferred.
- Ability to impart information in an understandable way to the public under a variety of conditions.

NOTE: You need not be a marine biology student/graduate to apply.

How to Apply

Please submit the following via e-mail to monica.pepe@whales.org:

1. Cover letter and Resume (no more than 3 pages)
2. Contact information for two references including e-mail and phone numbers
3. A supporting document of no more than 500 words answering one of the following:
 - Do whales die through human's knowledge or ignorance?
 - Preservation or conservation. Which offers the best route to a sustainable population of an endangered species and why?
 - How do you convert apathy into interest and then into action?

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Applicants should make sure they clearly indicate their availability (specific dates, if possible) in their cover letter. Successful applicants will be contacted after the application deadline to set up an interview.

Any additional questions should be directed to Monica Pepe via email at monica.pepe@whales.org or by calling the office at (508) 746-2522.

WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, is the leading international charity dedicated solely to the worldwide conservation and welfare of all whales, dolphins, and porpoises. WDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin.