

## Allied Whale Internship Program

Allied Whale (AW), the marine mammal research lab of College of the Atlantic and Bar Harbor Whale Watch Co. (BHWW) seeks 5 interns/research assistants for the 2022 field season. These are entry-level research positions designed to offer experience for individuals seeking to develop their professional careers in marine mammal research. Two summer positions (May 15 through August 31) and three full season positions (May 15 through October 14) are available.

**Overview of position:** This is a unique internship program in that the selected individuals will have the opportunity to participate and receive training in a wide range of marine mammal research activities Allied Whale while also working as a crew/scientist aboard commercial whale watching trips operating from Bar Harbor, Maine. Allied Whale currently supports field projects in the trophic ecology of humpback and fin whales, the ongoing housing and maintenance of the North Atlantic humpback and fin whale photo ID catalogs, an active stranding response program, and a research/education partnership with Bar Harbor Whale Watch Co. In addition, Allied Whale maintains the facilities on and conducts research from Mount Desert Rock, a remote offshore island. The interns play a critical role in the success of the field season and serve as support to all aspects of summer activities within both Allied Whale and Bar Harbor Whale Watch Co.

**Description of duties:** Upon arrival in May, all interns will receive research, boat crew, and Gulf of Maine natural history training by both Allied Whale and the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company staff. As the Allied Whale field season does not begin until early June- the first several weeks will be focused on hands-on training of whale watch deckhand responsibilities, helping with boat maintenance, and assisting with whale catalog matching in the office or stranding response.

Once the season is in full swing, interns will rotate through shifts working as a Research Assistant/Deckhand (RA) for the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Co., shifts working as deck/galley on lighthouse/nature cruises, shifts in the Allied Whale office, and time off. Every week, schedules will be different and weather dependent. A typical week in June-August may include 2-4 days scheduled as researchers on Whale Watch vessels, 1-2 days scheduled in the office, and two days off (these days may or may not be consecutive). Weather may cause shifts to be canceled and some weeks may be lighter in load or responsibilities.

Below are specific expectations for each designated shift:

*Whale watch trips:* Research responsibilities on the whale watch trips include searching for whales, photo-identification of whales, and behavioral data collection. RAs will also collect pelagic seabird data during offshore travel to the whale feeding areas. Beyond research, RAs are responsible for assisting the naturalist in promoting education and conservation programs on each trip. In this, maintaining a positive, professional, and friendly demeanor while engaging whale watch passengers and fellow crew is necessary. Deckhand responsibilities include line handling, vessel cleaning, helping seasick passengers, and passenger safety. When whale watch trips cancel for weather, crew may be asked to report for duty to complete maintenance on the vessel.

*Allied Whale office shifts:* On scheduled office days, interns will be required to be available in the Allied Whale office from 9AM-5PM. During those hours, interns will match individual whales to our catalog, enter their whale watch data into the database, manage the Adopt-a-whale program, answer phone calls to the office, and be on call for assisting with response to strandings or necropsies. Interns schedule for office shifts will also be on call for boat research days.

*Allied Whale boat research days:* When weather permits, interns will assist Allied Whale staff and graduate students on trips offshore to collect biopsy samples of humpback and fin whales. While on board one of the

research vessels, interns will be responsible for collecting photo identification of whales and recording data. Interns will be responsible for processing images from these trips. If schedule allows, RAs may also participate in an overnight trip to collect samples in Canada.

*Mount Desert Rock:* We hope for interns to also complete several shifts (each at least a week in length) at our offshore research station Mount Desert Rock. While on the island, interns will participate in land-based whale monitoring from the lighthouse tower, seal counts, gull counts, and maintenance/construction projects at the station. Interns will collect weekly samples of seal scat to contribute to a collaborative microplastics project. Interns will also receive experience working in a remote off-the-grid location. Once hired, RAs will work to develop a collaborative group project (on seal colony, intertidal community, nesting birds, jellies, etc.) and will take turns with data collection during their shifts offshore. RAs will also stay in contact with the BHWW office with sightings reports.

**Pay/Housing:** Those accepted to the program are able to earn income by their work on the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company. Deckhands are paid \$55 a trip (at the height of summer, there are 2 trips running a day). Interns also receive free First Aid Certification. Provided housing in downtown Bar Harbor is mandatory for a fee. Rent for the season will total approximately \$2080 for summer interns and \$2350 for full season interns. While at Mount Desert Rock, food is provided for free. **\*\*After August 31, if any of the summer interns are interested they are welcome to work full time for the remainder of the season as crew for the BHWW as deckhand/galley on lighthouse trips, nature cruises, whale watches, and cruise ship tendering operations.**

**Qualifications:** Applicants should have a college background or be currently enrolled in a biology, ecology, and/or marine sciences program. Previous data collection experience in a research setting and/or knowledge of marine mammals are great advantages. While training will be provided and no prior boating/camera experience is required, time spent offshore or skills in photography are also assets. Due to Coast Guard requirements, all crew onboard US commercial vessels and therefore all research assistants/interns, must be US citizens or have permanent resident alien status. Also, all interns will be drug screened prior to employment and will be enrolled in a random drug testing program. Most importantly, applicants must be positive in attitude, flexible to quickly changing schedules, able to work independently, and be seaworthy/comfortable working on boats in rough weather. Lastly, because of the community living situation both in Bar Harbor and on Mount Desert Rock, applicants must get along well with others and be able to handle working in a team setting.

**To apply:** Please send a cover letter detailing your reasons for applying, a resume, and two letters of recommendation via email to [AlliedWhale.Internships@gmail.com](mailto:AlliedWhale.Internships@gmail.com). Recommendation letters may either be sent with the application or directly from the references.

**Please specify which position you are interested in (summer or full-season). Deadline of application is February 27th.**