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IYIP Update: Experiences of the Interns

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IYIP Update: Experiences of the Interns

A group of 7 young professionals departed for the Caribbean and South America in mid-January, 2011 to undertake internships through the International Youth Internship Program of the Marine Affairs Program. This project was undertaken with the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, with the financial support of the Canadian International Development Agency.



Front row (l to r):
Lauren Donnelly,
Elaine Ferrier, Valerie
Francella, Lara Puetz,
Veronica Baker.
Back row: Jonathan
Underwood & Erin
Mutrie.

Veronica Baker, *Integrated Coastal Area Management Assistant, IOCARIBE, Colombia and Barbados*

Veronica Baker was hired to work with IOCARIBE, a regional subsidiary body of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Veronica's position as an Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) Assistant saw her working on a wide range of projects ranging from localized coastal management activities to regional initiatives that aim to build the resilience of Caribbean island economies dependent on tourism.

Veronica was originally assigned to work for six months in Colombia and complete six weeks of attachment work with the Barbados CZMU; her time in Barbados was extended by two months to assist CZMU staff with their projects and immerse herself in ICAM activities. By the end of her internship, Veronica had assisted coastal practitioners with the acquisition and application of water resource modeling tools and data management systems, assisted engineers with coastal structures and cliff

stability vulnerability inspections, performed soil salinity analysis, attended beach profiling and coral reef monitoring sessions, and prepared documentation related to ICAM activities in the Caribbean. She also participated in the Caribbean Tsunami Warning Exercise, a national Tier III Oil Spill Simulation Exercise, and a regional ICAM Training Workshop.

Veronica spent her free time in the water (SCUBA diving, swimming, etc.), dancing cumbia and salsa, camping on and exploring beaches, mountains, and jungles, and enjoying the vibrant cities within which she lived.

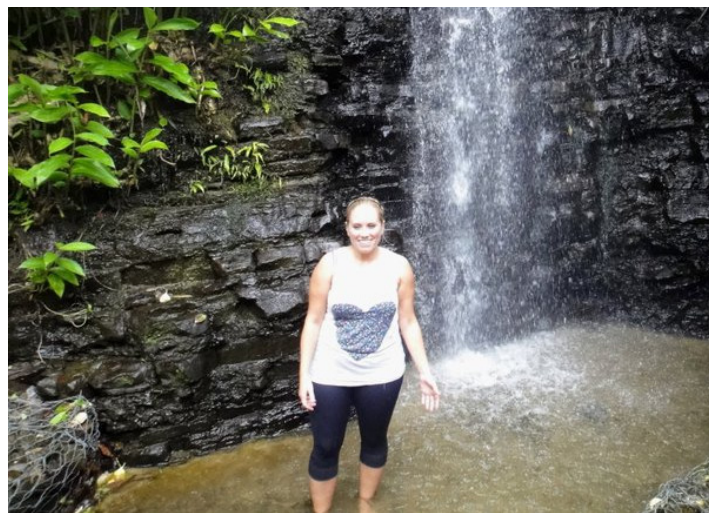
"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work in two countries as a CIDA IYIP intern, as this experience exposed me to international development dynamics, enhanced my experience in integrated resource management, and benefited me in the realms of personal and professional development."

On a side note, Veronica was elated as a media latina (translated: half latina) to visit South America for the first time and hone her Spanish-speaking skills.

Lauren Donnelly, *Capacity Building Assistant, IOCARIBE, Jamaica*

During her internship, Lauren Donnelly worked as a Capacity Building Assistant for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Kingston, Jamaica. In this role, Lauren supported the organization by reporting on such issues as the foundations of ‘green economy’ and the environmental implications of climate change in the Wider Caribbean region.

As part of her placement, Lauren conducted an interview with the 2011 L’Oreal-UNESCO Special Fellowship Grant awardee, Dr. Marcia Roye (Professor of Biotechnology at the University of West Indies), which was subsequently included in the office’s newsletter. In May, Lauren had the opportunity to attend the Eleventh Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE-XI) in Miami, where she was able to network with professionals from all over the Caribbean and learn about regional cooperation for sustainable development.



Lauren cooling off during an afternoon hike in Jamaica’s Blue Mountains.

This IYIP internship allowed Lauren to gain her first international work experience, and confirmed her desire to pursue work in developing countries.

“I greatly enjoyed living and working in Jamaica. I was able to learn about the daily operations of a high profile international organization while experiencing the rich Jamaican culture and beautiful landscapes the country has to offer.”

Elaine Ferrier, *Pelagic Fishery Assistant, Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

Just days after defending her Master’s thesis at the University of Waterloo, Elaine started her internship at the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) field office in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. While at CRFM, Elaine spearheaded a project to determine a hierarchy of stakeholder values and objectives for the future management of the flyingfish fishery. Elaine traveled to landing sites in Barbados and Tobago to discuss management goals and preferences with fishers and fish processors. An adapted Pairwise Comparison technique was used in this consultation process, where respondents shuffled and sorted cards indicating their preferred management goals and objectives in order of importance. This interactive technique prompted great discussions, and produced a ranked hierarchy of the most important objectives for future management of the fishery. The project was paired with fellow intern Lara Puetz’s study on Dolphin-fish, and both interns worked together to find data gaps in historical records for these species.

The research was presented at the CRFM 7th Annual Scientific Meeting, where representatives from the member states were present to share national fishery updates and collaborate on research. Elaine presented at the Plenary Session and was a member of the Small Coastal Pelagics Working Group where she had the opportunity to learn from a wide range of government and academic fisheries experts.

“I had a truly incredible stay in St. Vincent, and made friends and partnerships that will keep me coming back.”



Elaine Ferrier meeting with a local fisherman.

Highlights included hiking to the top of the (active!) volcano, relaxing in salt ponds, snorkelling with sea turtles in the Grenadines, “smalling up” herself in transit vans that whip around the islands with booming soca music, and “liming” with friends watching the sun set over Young Island from a favourite post-work patio. Elaine continues to support the organization and new intern as they work on the second phase of the Flyingfish study.

Since returning to Canada she has begun work with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources doing conservation-based land use planning.

Erin Mutrie, *Marine Resource Management Assistant, Caribbean Regional Fishery Mechanism (CRFM), Belize City, Belize*

During her placement, Erin Mutrie had the opportunity to work on a wide array of projects. She collected information from CRFM Member States to get up-to-date statistics regarding the domestic use, international trade and management of the commercial spiny lobster fishery. With this information, she edited an existing baseline review of the status of the spiny lobster fishery in the Caribbean. She was able to present this material to the heads of fisheries of CRFM Member States at the ACP Fish II Regional Monitoring Workshop in Belize City. Erin also organized and participated in meetings between researchers from the Florida Sea Grant and Fishing Cooperatives in Belize City. The meetings were the beginnings of a project aiming to improve capacity of fisherfolk organizations in the Caribbean region. Erin also assisted the Belize Fisheries Department in the field with conducting sea cucumber surveys in southern Belize.

On weekends, Erin spent her time travelling and diving. One of the highlights of her time in Central America was her four day trip to Antigua, Guatemala where she watched the Semana Santa processions, spent time in the local markets and did a two day hike of Volcán Acatenango.

“The professional and personal experiences I had during my IYIP placement have undoubtedly helped me attain many of the necessary skills for working in an international setting. I encourage graduates to apply for this unique and unforgettable experience.”



Erin spent many of her weekends diving near Caye Caulker, Belize.

Valerie Francella, *Marine Protected Area Management Assistant, Sustainable Grenadines Inc, Union Island*

In early January, Valerie Francella landed for the first time on the small mountainous landmass of Union Island. Located in the South East region of the Caribbean Ocean, Union island is one of seven tiny inhabited islands that make up the Grenadines of Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. The reefs surrounding these islands are some of the most diverse and vulnerable of the Eastern Caribbean.

Sustainable Grenadines Inc. (SusGren) is a NGO focused largely on Grenadines wide protection of these reefs, while also promoting sustainable livelihoods and improved marine management in the area. Valerie was placed at SusGren, alongside intern Jonathan Underwood, to assist with various resource management projects in the area. Valerie’s role included administration tasks and organizing events related to two large Grenadine wide projects.

Under the project entitled “Strengthening Reef Management in the Grenada Bank,” Valerie was involved in the creation of a Grenadine wide MPA network. Following the formation of the network, Valerie helped organize seminars and field sessions to train local MPA staff and volunteers in reef check monitoring methodology.

The other major project that Valerie was involved with, titled “Developing a Marine Multi-use Zoning Plan for the Grenadines” is a two year project to promote sustainable development in the area through marine spatial planning. As part of this project, Valerie was able to assist in a Grenadines wide kick-off workshop for key stakeholders. She then helped to organize and facilitate a series of community meetings to introduce the project and begin data collection that were held on all inhabited Grenadine islands.

Other activities in which Valerie was involved included bird monitoring as part of the Caribbean Waterbird Census and leatherback sea turtle watches with a local environmentalist group.

“During my internship I gained valuable experience working with complex marine management issues. I was given the opportunity to get involved in the community and to take part in Caribbean cultural activities like Carnival!”



Valerie recording data during the first reef check ever conducted in Sandy Island/Oyster Bed.

Lara Puetz, *Pelagic Fishery Assistant, Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

Lara’s role as an intern at CRFM was to research methodologies useful for data-deficient fisheries and attempt to apply an Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing (ERAEF) to the Eastern Caribbean dolphinfish fishery. One of the main goals of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project is to work towards the sustainable management of shared marine resources within the region, through improved regional databases, addressing major issues, causes and actions for the living

marine resources and the implementation of management reforms. Lara was involved in using ERAEF to assist in the CLME project objectives for the large pelagic dolphinfish fishery exploited by many nations within the western central Atlantic region.

Two main events stood out as the most exciting, challenging and rewarding aspects of her internship. The first was the fisher representative interviews in Barbados and St Lucia, which gathered the expert opinions of the fisher folk on research related to the ERAEF assessment on the dolphinfish fishery. The interviews were held at several landing sites throughout the two countries. Lara learned about the life of a fisherman in the Caribbean, how the fishery worked and also about the people and culture of the country. Her second memorable and rewarding work experience was actively participating in the 7th Annual CRFM Scientific Meeting which took place at the end of June 2011. It provided a wonderful venue to share and discuss the research she had been working on over the past five months to the Department of Fisheries representatives of CRFM Member States and international consultants in the Large Pelagic Working Group and Plenary sessions.

Lara also had plenty of opportunities to experience the local culture and hidden treasure of St Vincent and the Grenadine islands with other CIDA interns in the local region. Diving in areas around the Tobago Cays Marine Park and dive sites around the “Main Land” of St Vincent, as it was referred to by locals, was absolutely spectacular. Lara also hiked up the active island volcano, “La Soufriere.” “Vincy Mas,” the Carnival hosted on St Vincent, coincided with the last few weeks of the internship. Music, dancing and gorgeous costumes decorated the streets of many communities around the island; Lara and the other interns were able to throw themselves into the thick of carnival and truly feel part of the community.

“I would like to thank MAP for providing me with the opportunity to participate in the IYIP internship. It was an unforgettable six months of my life and the experience of working in the Caribbean and learning from the local people is a knowledge that I will carry through to future experiences.”

MAP Matters is the newsletter of the Marine Affairs Program, Faculty of Management, Dalhousie University. Send news items along with photos to marine.affairs@dal.ca.