NECWA Internship Program Overview for Perspective Participants

Revised 2016

The New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance (NECWA) is seeking qualified upper level high school, college students, and graduate students within the New England community to assist with various projects and activities through our Marine Wildlife Research Program. Available positions are non-paid (volunteer) and are in the form of an internship program. NECWA interns work alongside staff conducting a variety of educational programs, research projects, and conservation activities.

NECWA Mission Statement

The New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance (NECWA) is a volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and conserving the unique coastal marine wildlife off New England. NECWA research activities are used to advance the scientific knowledge of coastal marine wildlife as well as support conservation and protection efforts. This information also forms the basis of our educational outreach activities within the New England community.

I - Internship Responsibilities and Activities:

Educational Activities:

Interns will assist with various environmental education programs including:

- educational outreach aboard commercial whale-watching boats
- private and public school presentations
- community-based presentations
- community fairs and festivals
- beach cleanups that are part of Coastsweep, the Mass Annual Statewide Cleanup
- attend weekly seminars that include PPT presentations made by NECWA staff on various topics in the field of marine science.

Over the course of the internship program, each intern must participate in:

- 1 or 2 festivals or fairs
- 1 or 2 school presentations or public presentations
- 1 beach cleanup
- weekly NECWA seminars

Data Analysis Responsibilities:

- Learn photo-identification techniques used to analyze ventral tail patterns for humpback whales. Also learn how to apply these techniques to other cetaceans as well as other marine wildlife.
- Use Adobe Photoshop for image manipulation and processing.
- Use Microsoft Excel for data input and analysis of sighting, environmental, and behavioral data collected from commercial whale-watching vessels.
- If interested, use video analysis software including Final Cut Express and iMovie.
- If interested, use 3-D computer imaging software such as Maya.

Internship Time Log:
All interns must record their hours and activities on timesheets that are handed in each week.

Research Activities:

- **Spring, Summer and Fall Opportunities:**
  From late April through mid October, NECWA interns have the opportunity to work aboard commercial whale-watching boat owned and operated by Plymouth and Provincetown Whale Watching, Plymouth MA. When offshore, interns work alongside the naturalist assisting with educational outreach activities. They also help collect sighting, environmental, and behavioral data on marine wildlife observed from the vessel. Interns will also learn how to use digital cameras and videos to collect photo/video information on the marine wildlife offshore. Interns are required to help the naturalist identify the humpback whales seen during each trip. Interns also help write overviews of specific trips that are posted on the NECWA and the Plymouth and Provincetown online blogs.

- **Late Fall and Early Winter Opportunities:** There are a variety of activities over the course of the fall and winter.

  Ocean Sunfish Research: Interns can assist with activities associated with NEBShark (New England Basking Shark Project), a community-sighting network for basking sharks and ocean sunfish seen in Cape Cod Bay and Massachusetts Bay. From September through December, assistance is needed to respond to strandings of live and dead ocean sunfish on local beaches. Necropsies are conducted on dead animals and samples are collected and analyzed at a later date. Two projects include DNA analysis and aging analysis.

  Sea Turtle Rescues:
  Interns work alongside NECWA staff to walk beaches in an effort to locate and rescue cold-stunned sea turtles that strand on southeastern MA beaches each fall and early winter. We work in collaboration with Mass Audubon at Wellfleet Bay.

- **Marine Mammal Necropsies with IFAW and the New England Aquarium:**
  Through collaborations with other marine wildlife organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, NECWA interns have the opportunity to participate in necropsies of marine mammals including dolphins, porpoises, and seals. Opportunities to participate in necropsies are dependent upon the number of strandings in the New England area and the need for assistance expressed by collaborating organizations.

- **Sea Turtle Necropsies with Massachusetts Audubon at Wellfleet Bay:**
  Working with staff at Wellfleet Bay, NECWA interns will have the opportunity to assist with sea turtle necropsies each winter. Sea turtles that will be examined are cold-stunned individuals that stranded in the fall and early winter on southeastern MA beaches, including those of Cape Cod. Necropsies are not scheduled in advance and are dependent upon the number of cold-stunned sea turtles that wash ashore during a particular season.

II - Additional Activities:

Interns can choose to work on an individual project over the duration of their internship program. This project must be proposed by the student and agreed upon with the NECWA Internship Coordinator.

III - Structure of Internship Positions:

Positions are unpaid and are therefore on a volunteer basis. Interns must have their own transportation to and from work areas and housing is not provided. However, NECWA will offer suggestions and will provide assistance in any way possible.

IV - Time Requirement:

- Interns must be able to commit to 3 or 4 month positions; start and end dates are flexible due to school schedules.
- Interns must work a minimum of 30 hours per week. From April through the end of October, this includes working 3 days each week offshore aboard commercial whale-watching vessels.

V - Communication with Internship Coordinator:

Interns are required to maintain consistent communication with the NECWA Internship Coordinator. Regular communications on a weekly basis allow the Internship Coordinator to keep abreast of the intern's progress and provide guidance when necessary. Communications can be in the form of phone calls, emails or meetings.

VI - NECWA Clothing Requirement: NECWA interns must purchase a NECWA 3-season jacket, intern polo shirt, NECWA sweatshirt, and marine wildlife field guide prior to the start of their internship program. The cost for these items is $150. NECWA clothing is required for it identifies you as part of this organization when you work aboard commercial whale-watching vessels or when you are working in the field during rescues, strandings, and necropsies.

VII - Qualifications:

Internships are open to upper level high school, college, or graduate students, who are currently enrolled in, or recently graduated from an accredited college or university.

Preference will be given to students or recent graduates working towards degrees in biology, environmental studies, marine science, education, or other related fields.

Additional Qualifications:

NECWA is looking for interns who:

- demonstrate strong written and verbal communication skills
- are adaptable, flexible, and willing to learn
- are responsible and hard-working
- are able to work both independently and as part of a team
- speak politely and appropriately to NECWA staff and other volunteers
- are good listeners who are able to follow instructions
- understand that they provide support to NECWA staff members
- be willing to assist with additional activities and projects that support NECWA's mission.

VIII - To Apply:

- Go to the NECWA website, and print the formal intern application. Fill this out and mail to NECWA at the address below.

  NECWA
  c/o Dr. Mary Nash, Intern Coordinator
  11 Clarence Soule Drive
  Middleboro, MA 02346

Also, mail or email the material below to our Intern Coordinator, Dr. Mary Nash:

- resume,
- letter of intent,
- and 1 letter of recommendation from a teacher or person that has worked with you.

Intern Coordinator, Dr. Mary Nash at mcnash@capecod.net.

To learn more about NECWA, visit us at:

- necwa.org
- necwanews.blogspot.com
- nebshark.org

Thank you,
Dr. Mary C. Nash
NECWA Intern Coordinator
mcnash@capecod.net

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