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CMIL MURP Internship Experience

This summer, I had the opportunity to participate in the CMIL MURP internship, where I worked on a project involving Baited Remote Underwater Videos also known as BRUVs. Before I started this internship, I had never heard of BRUVs, but by the end of this internship I understood how they can be used to study marine life without disturbing the environment. My main job was reviewing some of the underwater footage and identifying different fish species that appeared on camera. It required a lot of patience, time and attention to detail, but it was also exciting because every video was different. You never knew what was going to swim by next. I was able to see sharks and seals aside from the different fish that appeared on footage.

One of the highlights of my internship was getting the chance to go out on a research boat. I didn't think I would have any issues since I had some experience on boat rides but I got pretty seasick, which definitely wasn't the most fun part of the day. But aside from that, it was such a cool experience to see how marine field work is actually done. Being out on the water and watching the team deploy equipment and work together gave me a whole new appreciation for everything that happens before the data is reviewed. It was really cool to get hands-on experience and see the research process from start to finish instead of just reading or hearing about it.

(BRUVs used to collect footage)
(On the research boat, with my mentor Sarah Rosenblatt and researcher Chris Honeyman)

The biggest thing I learned was the purpose and importance of Marine Protected Areas also known as MPAs. At first, I thought MPAs were just places where fishing wasn't completely restricted, but I learned they're much more than that. They help protect marine ecosystems, give fish populations a chance to recover, and allow scientists to have a better understanding of how conservation efforts impact biodiversity over time. Comparing BRUV footage from protected and non-protected areas, researchers can see how these ecosystems change and why protecting them is important.

This internship also gave me a better understanding of what marine research looks like behind the scenes. I used to think research was mostly about collecting data and samples, but I realized that analyzing data is just as important. Watching and reviewing BRUV footage may

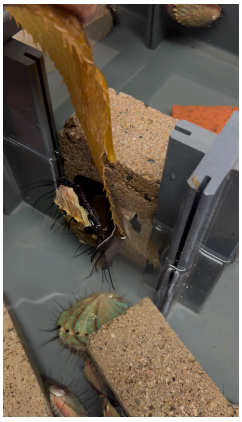
seem simple, but every observation is a contribution to a much bigger picture about ocean health and conservation.

(Sea lion caught on BRUVs footage)

(Shark caught on BRUVs footage)

Another part of my internship that I really enjoyed was helping out in the lab by cleaning some of the tanks. It may not sound like the most exciting task, but it gave me a better appreciation for everything that goes into maintaining a research lab. I was able to learn about the different things some marine animals eat, and how they look up close as well. It was nice to be able to help out in a hands-on way. I was also able to learn the technique on how to siphon tanks using a flexible tube to remove water and waste to give these tank animals a cleaner environment.

(Cleaning the abalone tank)



(feeding an abalone snail)

Overall, this internship was an amazing experience. I learned so much about marine conservation, research, and the importance of protecting our oceans. It gave me the chance to step outside my comfort zone, even if that meant getting seasick on a boat, meeting amazing people, and experiencing what it's really like to work in marine science environment I'm so grateful to have been part of this program, and I'm excited to continue to learn and explore opportunities in this field.