

# Internship Description, Responsibilities & Requirements

The Wild Dolphin Project is the longest-running underwater dolphin research study in the world. Since 1985, WDP has studied two resident communities of Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*) and bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) in the northern Bahamas.

During the summer field season we are offering a limited internship program, open to college undergraduates, graduates, and high school seniors. Space is limited for this highly competitive opportunity.

Interns will assist in collection of data in the field, photo identification processes, data entry, and specialized projects as available. Students must be currently registered in a relevant university or high school program, have swimming and snorkeling skills (and equipment), and be willing to be at sea for 9 days at a time.

All trips leave from West Palm Beach on a Tuesday morning at 9am and return 9 days later on a Wednesday evening around 4pm. Students may apply to do two trips back to back (space permitting) to maximize their experience. Students who do not live locally are responsible for their travel costs and housing before, after, and in between each trip.

Students can check at their own universities to receive credit for projects specified by their advisor if desired. Areas of interests for students include behavior, acoustics, or ecology and can be accommodated for focused projects while on board.

All interns must be 18 years of age at the time of the trip unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

This is an unpaid internship. The cost of the internship program covers food and housing for a 9-day live-aboard research trip in the Bahamas. Your booking will be secured upon 100% payment of the trip cost. Please contact us to be added to the waiting list for this season or next season.

Daytime hours are typically spent looking for, or working with, the dolphins. Observations occur both from the surface and in the water. Observations are made from our 62-foot research vessel or in our inflatable boat.

During the evening hours (if weather conditions permit) lectures are given on dolphin identification, biology, behavior, and acoustics.

Lectures are given by Dr. Herzing, scientific colleagues, or current graduate students working with WDP in their area of specialty. Published scientific peer-reviewing papers can be found on WDP's website under the *Research* section.

Trip Price: \$3,750 plus departure tax

## Responsibilities:

1. Conduct daily dolphin watches on the bridge
2. Assist the Research Assistant or Graduate Students in logging data into our database
3. Assist with in-the-water underwater photography

4. Assist with processing dolphin photographs for photo identification
5. Review underwater video in the evenings and assist WDP staff with logging individuals and behavior.
6. Provide an oral presentation on an endangered marine animal (assignment instructions will be provided)
7. Lead a group discussion about a scientific article (assignment details will be provided in advance)

Skill sets required:

1. Ability to live in small quarters onboard a research vessel, at sea, for 9 days.
2. Swimming in strong currents and proficient snorkeling skills are required (no scuba diving skills needed).
3. Skills in photography, media processing, and data processing are a plus.
4. Must be willing to work in a team and safely in the water, and on a boat, under the instructions of researchers and graduate students.
5. A working knowledge of biology, evolution, and life sciences is helpful and encouraged.

## Requirements:

Students must:

1. Provide verification that you are currently a student (i.e. student transcripts, student ID card, etc.). This is required for all internship applicants when they place their deposit/reserve their space on board.
2. Currently be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program, with an emphasis or interest in biology, psychology, or environmental studies.
3. Provide a current passport, which is required to enter the Bahamas and to re-enter the U.S. on our research vessel, Stenella. If you currently don't have a passport, let us know at the time of sign up (the application process for a passport can take a few weeks, so please make sure you have enough time to obtain one and email us the information before the trips departs).

### **Please Note:**

Dr. Herzing is not always on board for intern trips and working with her is not guaranteed. The intern supervisors are usually the Research Assistant or Graduate Students, however Dr. Herzing might stop by the boat (if possible).

During all of our trips we document dolphin ID's, their behaviors and sound, and life history information. You will learn about their natural behavior and sounds, their relationships, and their lives in the wild. During the summer, Dr. Herzing and her colleagues focus on specific projects such as our two-way work with CHAT. However, this is very advanced work and is limited to Dr. Herzing's colleagues and research scientists. We will not be doing our two-way work with the general public onboard, but we can share certain aspects of our attempts and vision of the work with you while you are onboard.

This is a chance for interns to learn what it is like to live and work on a research vessel for many days at sea. This is a great opportunity to get a recommendation letter and to build your resume. Our advice is to take this trip seriously and use it as an opportunity to see if research and fieldwork is right for you. Ask questions, participate, and gain an experience of a lifetime.

**Please contact WDP if you have any questions [wdptrips@wilddolphinproject.org](mailto:wdptrips@wilddolphinproject.org) or 561-575-5660**