



Hutton Program Furthers Futures in Fisheries

By Bailey Edelstein

If there is anything to learn from Caitlin McGarigal about entering the world of professional fisheries biology, it is patience and perseverance. In 2007, McGarigal was awarded a scholarship through the Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program to fund her volunteer work in the research lab of Francis Juanes and doctoral student David Stormer at the University of Massachusetts. McGarigal's account of personal and academic determination over the years highlight her perpetually growing interests and fascinations within the field.

"I was already interested in a career in fisheries when I began volunteering [at the University of Massachusetts], but the Hutton scholarship provided me with my first true research experience and definitely strengthened my confidence in pursuing [a future in] the field of fisheries and marine science," McGarigal said.

When McGarigal was appointed to be a Hutton scholar in high school, the opportunity served as a pivotal point in the development of her professional future. Her participation in fisheries science and exemplary work ethic were indicative of a bright future in fisheries for McGarigal. She illustrated her true tenacity in the biology field as an undergraduate when she was offered some of the most comprehensive positions at government agencies and university research centers.

"I always had the advantage over my classmates in college and over my competitors when applying for jobs," McGarigal said.

It was her robust resume and high levels of performance in these positions that led her to accomplish what she has in such a short time frame. McGarigal graduated in 2012 from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth with a B.S. in biology focused on marine studies. Nearly seven years after her first professional exposure to the fisheries realm as a junior in high school, this Hutton alum finds herself at the start of a prestigious masters program in marine fisheries biology at California State University at Long Beach.

"In this career, research experience is everything and the sooner you start accumulating those skills and knowledge, the more valuable you will be to employers and the more doors will be open for you," McGarigal said.

When asked to lend any advice to current and future Hutton scholars, McGarigal stressed the importance of getting involved early on.



“Take advantage of the diversity of research within the broad field of fisheries science. It took me 10 years to narrow down what I wanted to pursue in my own career but some of those very first internships and tech positions provided me with skills and taught me methods that I will use throughout my career,” McGarigal said.

After her first professional volunteering experience as a Hutton scholar at the University of Massachusetts uncovering the life history of juvenile bluefish, McGarigal worked hard to develop her own research interests. Her personal focus shifted to studying large pelagics and elasmobranchs. After graduation from Dartmouth, she spent time working as a fisheries biologist for the U.S. Forest Service in Oregon and later shared her skills as a research technician at the Florida Program for Shark Research, where she realized her passion for behavioral ecology and aspects of physiology.

“I am also concerned with improving relationships and communication between the scientific, political, and fishing communities—which I believe is essential to successful long-term conservation and management of species, and will only become increasingly more important in the future,” McGarigal said.

McGarigal is just one of many Hutton scholars who have grown personally and academically from their experiences in the Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program. Keep a look out for this alum—she is sure to make waves in fisheries science.