



Sea Watch Foundation: Research Intern Opportunity 2018

Interns are invited to assist the Sea Watch Foundation (SWF) with the running of the “Cardigan Bay Monitoring Project”. The project is based in New Quay, West Wales, and supports the conservation management of the bottlenose dolphin, harbour porpoise and grey seal populations of Cardigan Bay, monitoring their abundance, distribution, reproductive success and population structure using a combination of vessel-based and land-based surveys. SWF has been monitoring these populations on behalf of the Welsh government (through funding provided by Natural Resources Wales) for over a decade. Cardigan Bay contains Britain’s largest coastal population of bottlenose dolphins, for which two Special Areas of Conservation have been established under the EU Habitats Directive.

Interns will help the Cardigan Bay Monitoring Officer and the Sightings Officer by taking part in the following tasks:

- Land-based surveys
- Boat-based surveys
- Photo-identification matching
- Data entry
- Raising public awareness
- Education initiatives and events
- Assisting with and participation in training courses and other needs of the charity.

In addition to these tasks, we have some specialist equipment, two hydrophones and a drone, to opportunistically collect acoustic and aerial data during boat-based surveys. If you are particularly interested and have experience working with either of these pieces of equipment, please draw our attention to it in your covering letter and application form, highlighting relevant experience.

Interns are required from early April until the end of October 2018. The research season is split into four separate periods, each lasting 7 weeks. The research periods for the 2018 season are:

April 9th- May 27th

May 28th - July 15th

July 16th - September 2nd

September 3rd - October 21st

Interns are expected to arrive on the first day of their chosen period and depart on the first day of the next period. Start and end dates are not flexible.

Preference will be given to those applying for more than one period.

Interns will be based in New Quay, Ceredigion, West Wales. Accommodation is provided by a private landlord through rental of a house that interns share at a rate of around £73 per person per week. Rooms are shared between two or three people, with a total of nine people in the house at any given time. Interns are responsible for their own travel, accommodation and living expenses, but it is generally quite easy to obtain part-time paid work in the area if required.

Important skills/qualifications

Essential:

- an ability to work independently in a meticulous and reliable manner
- strong commitment to volunteering work
- willingness to work long hours outdoors in often changeable Welsh weather
- good IT skills (Office package)
- an ability to get on well with others in a small team and in shared accommodation

Desirable:

- a strong interest and knowledge of British cetaceans
- a background in marine biology/environmental science or similar
- prior experience in boat-based survey work
- good verbal and written communication skills and in public speaking
- experience in interacting with the public

All interns will be trained in cetacean observation and identification, in boat survey protocols, and photo-identification of bottlenose dolphins.

Normal office hours are from 10:00 to 17:00 hrs but field work regularly falls outside these hours, particularly land-based watches which take place throughout the day in two hour shifts from 07:00 to 21:00. Interns will sometimes be scheduled onto 'early' and 'late' shifts to accommodate these. Line transect surveys are all day surveys and will typically start in the early morning hours and run for at least 8 hours.

Prospective interns should be aware that they will be contributing to ongoing, established research projects that routinely inform government agencies on the status of cetaceans in the UK, and accordingly are expected to take the internship seriously and prioritise it over extra-curricular activities. Working in a small NGO environment in a tight knit team can be a challenging experience and requires a high degree of flexibility, tolerance and a positive attitude. After initial training, interns will often be expected to work in the absence of direct supervision so the ability to work independently and maintain a positive, proactive outlook is essential.

Internships with Sea Watch have frequently led to established posts in national and international research and conservation bodies, as well as providing a stepping stone for students to undertake doctoral studies in marine mammal science.

International applications are welcome but it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure visa requirements are met and we ask applicants to highlight their chosen visa option in their application.

To apply:

Please send your CV and application form, with a cover letter and contact details of two referees, reporting any relevant experience you have, to Katrin Lohrengel- katrin.lohrengel@seawatchfoundation.org.uk

Deadline: 14th January 2018.

Please specify RESEARCH INTERN in your subject title.

Successful applicants will be notified of the outcomes by the 14th February 2018

Potential funding sources to support your internship with SWF

SWF is aware that undertaking unpaid work can be challenging. However, as a relatively small charity it is currently not able to offer compensation for internships. There are some outside funding bodies that may be able to help you fund your internship. If you are accepted for an internship, we are happy to provide letters to support your funding application.

If you are a current student or recent graduate it is worth checking whether your university offers financial support for students undertaking field work related to their degree subject.

This site offers a comprehensive list of potential grants to apply for: Gap Year Funding list 2017

<https://www.originalvolunteers.co.uk/volunteer-abroad-grants-gap-year-funding-list>

About the Sea Watch Foundation

The Sea Watch Foundation is a national marine environmental research charity that aims to achieve better conservation of whales and dolphins in the seas around Britain and Ireland, by involving the public in scientific monitoring of populations and the threats they face. It is the longest-running research charity in UK focusing upon cetaceans around the British Isles, and maintains a national sightings database, the largest in Europe. It works closely with all the UK statutory conservation agencies, and advises UK government, the UNEP Regional intergovernmental Conservation Agreement - ASCOBANS, the European Commission, as well as the major conservation charities and marine industries operating in the UK.

At Sea Watch Wales, we are dedicated to raising awareness, knowledge and conservation of the marine wildlife of the region. Our work is funded by the Countryside Council for Wales, Defra, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, and Environment Wales; and we work closely with the local management authority, Ceredigion County Council.

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Public awareness

We aim to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of the local marine wildlife and the habitats supporting them, to encourage respect and conservation of the area and its wildlife for future generations. We also run training courses for the public in cetacean identification and survey methods.

A list of recent of recent awareness and education achievements is given below:

- Sea Watch Director, Peter Evans, received the European Cetacean Society Conservation Award, 2012
- Sea Watch Foundation was recipient of the UNEP/ASCOBANS "Outreach and Education Award", 2009
- Sea Watch Foundation was voted best UK animal adoption scheme by BBC Wildlife, December 2008

Research

The purpose of our research here is to monitor the marine mammal populations inhabiting Cardigan Bay, so as to gain information to aid the conservation and long-term well being of these animals and the local marine environment. This is achieved by conducting various projects including:

- Estimating the abundance and distribution of bottlenose dolphins, harbour porpoises and grey seals within Cardigan Bay using distance sampling and opportunistic boat surveys
- Maintaining and updating a catalogue of photographically identified bottlenose dolphins in Wales in order to study their abundance, social structure, movements and life histories.