

Background:

My stay at Archipelagos, and my experience with this internship has been very fulfilling and enlightening. It was very easy for me to integrate into the institute thanks to the welcoming and helpful nature of the management. It was very easy to communicate with management in regards to work and any other issues. Through my time there, I gained a deeper appreciation and more insightful understanding for marine conservation, specifically in regards to plastic waste management. As an Environmental Educator, my tasks mostly involved the development of educational aids, but thanks to my initiative, I was able to be involved in other projects as well. The highlight of my internship is the expedition to Limnos island, where we visited 14 schools and educated local communities and schools about marine biodiversity around the Aegean Sea, and marine conservation in general.

I have developed a passion for marine conservation thanks to this institute, and I aim to work with them again for my Master's Thesis, which involves developing a device to mitigate marine debris along the coasts of Mediterranean islands. I presented my project proposal to management and to my fellow interns, which was met with interest by the institute, and they are eager to support me on this project.

The institute is clearly passionate about their work and aims to make a positive impact in regards to marine conservation. However, it is important for newer interns to have prior interest and knowledge about the topic, and show initiative. I was able to work closely with the scientific director and had good communication with the management in general due to my work. I was able to hone my communication and leadership skills as I engaged with many people during my internship period. I developed historical, cultural and social appreciation for Greece, as it was my first time going there. It was my first time working with an NGO, and staying at a comparatively remote location on an island. I was able to meet, and interact with many interns, and developed good bonds with them. I was also able to be involved in extra-curricular activities which further impacted my stay positively. Overall, my expectations were met and I would recommend this institute.

List of Works & Achievements:

- Developed lessons focused on marine wildlife and sustainability, including the creation of lesson plans, teacher guides, resources for interactive games, field activities, and more.
- Documented real-time work conducted by Archipelagos teams to engage with and share information with local communities and broader audiences.
- Designed tangible educational aids to highlight Archipelagos' research areas and conservation efforts, utilizing mediums such as infographics, PowerPoint presentations, posters, and more.
- Conducted research on Coastal Sea Bins (CSBs) for collecting plastic waste along the coasts of Samos, with the goal of developing this work into a Master's thesis project.
- Completed extracurricular courses (MOOCs) on marine conservation through EUNICE.
- Participated in macro-plastic cleanups on two beaches in Samos, including the sorting and proper disposal of collected plastics.

Limnos Expedition:

- Participated in a 12-day expedition to the island of Lemnos to assess coastal biodiversity, human activities and impacts, marine mammal populations, and to educate local and international communities.
- Collaborated with local communities and the NGO Lemnos Marine Conservation to establish an interactive visitor center aimed at educating locals about the island's biodiversity through educational materials and aids.
- Organized and facilitated two community meetings at the visitor center with local residents and fishermen to discuss marine conservation issues and develop actionable plans.
- Visited 14 schools, ranging from primary to high schools, to educate students and teachers about local marine biodiversity and raise awareness about environmental threats. Approximately 1,000 individuals participated in this campaign, conducted in collaboration with Lemnos Marine Conservation.
- Took part in an exploratory survey of the Aegean Sea around Lemnos Island to assess marine traffic, marine mammal biodiversity, and the density and health of seagrass at specific locations.