Ashley A. Whitt

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Education

Present M.S., Marine Biology

Texas A&M University Galveston Campus Marine Biology Interdisciplinary Program

2011 B.S., Marine Biology; Minor, Chemistry

University of North Carolina Wilmington

University Honors, Departmental Honors, and Cum Laude

Research Experience

2013-Present Graduate Research Assistant

Texas A&M University

Coastal and Wetlands Ecology Laboratory, Dr. Anna Armitage

 Thesis assess bird community composition responses to a changing mangrovemarsh ecotone by utilizing spatial analysis tools and crowdsourced citizen science data. Lead crews and organize field logistics for an international and interdisciplinary team studying ecosystem responses to mangrove expansion in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Managed data collection of bird use of restored brackish marshes in the JD Murphree Wildlife Management Area.

2012-2013 Research Assistant

Texas A&M University

Coastal and Wetlands Ecology Laboratory, Dr. Anna Armitage

Contributed to interdisciplinary team efforts in identifying ecosystem response
thresholds to black mangrove expansion into northern Gulf of Mexico salt marshes.
 Set up game camera experiment to capture how resident and migratory waterfowl
and wading birds use marsh restoration techniques differently.

2011-2012 Marine Ecology Senior Intern

Dauphin Island Sea Lab, AL

Marine Ecology Laboratory, Dr. Kenneth Heck

 Evaluated the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill impacts on the recruitment of commercially valuable finfish and crustaceans to seagrass beds. Collaborated with The Nature Conservancy on assessing the efficiency of oyster reefs abating shoreline erosion in Mobile Bay, AL. Surveyed water quality and the health of seagrass beds in AL, FL, and MS. Collaborated with National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife to study black mangrove expansion into the Gulf Islands National Seashore.

Summer 2011 Research Assistant

University of North Carolina Wilmington

Benthic Ecology Laboratory, Dr. Martin Posey and Mr. Troy Alphin

 Assessed nekton use and recruitment to oyster reefs for the American Recovery and Reassessment Act. Studied the effectiveness of seeding juvenile oysters on restored oyster reefs. Led field crews in collection of baseline samples for the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill potential impact on the Outer Banks, NC.

2009-2011 Laboratory Assistant

University of North Carolina Wilmington

Benthic Ecology Laboratory, Dr. Martin Posey and Mr. Troy Alphin

Developed protocol for analysis of sediment grain size using Beckman Coulter [™] counter. Collaborated with the Army Corps of Engineers on assessing the impact of river dredging on benthic populations. Helped coordinate homeowner associations in monitoring oyster spat settlement across NC estuarine coastlines.

Summer 2008 Laboratory Technician

University of Minnesota

Department of Civil Engineering, Dr. Timothy LaPara

• Assisted in investigating the transportation of microbial communities between wastewater treatment ponds via water fowl across the state of Minnesota.

Leadership Experience

2014-present	Graduate Studies Ambassador, Texas A&M University	Galveston, TX
2013-2014	President, Galveston Graduate Student Association	Galveston, TX
2008-2011	Ambassador, UNCW Student Ambassador Association	Wilmington, NC
2009-2010	Treasurer, Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society	Wilmington, NC
2007-2008	Historian, Tri House Area Chapter	Wilmington, NC

Teaching Experience

2015-Present University Leader

International Student Volunteers, TX and Costa Rica

 Mentor undergraduates in becoming active global citizens aware of sustainable development initiatives through teaching wildlife research in tropical ecosystems.

2014-Present Part-time Bay Educator

Galveston Bay Foundation, TX

• Combine environmental education and marsh restoration initiatives to inspire students to become active stewards of Galveston Bay's natural resources.

2014 & 2015 Teaching Assistant for Coastal Wetland Ecology

Texas A&M University

 Taught lab sections that focused on identification of wetland plants, understanding laws governing wetlands, and scientific writing.

Spring 2014 Mentor for Senior Honors Thesis

Texas A&M University

 Assisted in undergraduate semester long research project which investigated how brackish marsh restoration techniques impacted wading bird utilization of habitat.

Research Funding

2015	Galveston Graduate Student Ambassador Stipend (\$200)
2015	Texas Sea Grant-In-Aid of Graduate Research Award (\$2,000)
2015	Galveston Graduate Student Association Micro Grant (\$100)

2014	Galveston Graduate Student Ambassador Stipend (\$200)
2014	Galveston Graduate Student Association Travel Grant (\$500)
2014	Erma Lee and Luke Mooney Graduate Student Travel Grant (\$500)
2011	Honors Research Supplies Grant, Honors Scholars Program (\$500)

Memberships

Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) ● Galveston County Audubon Society Galveston Graduate Student Association (GGSA) ● Beta Beta Biological Honors Society

Outreach Events

2015	Organized Alvin High School AP Research Class visit to Texas A&M University Represented Marine Biology Department at Fairview Junior High Career Day	
	Team leader for Galveston Bay Foundation's Trash Bash at Armand Bayou	
	Interviewed for Texas A&M Galveston's Women's History Month	
2014-2015	Trip Liaison for Feather Fest: Galveston Birding and Nature Photo Festival	
2014	Invited as panelist to represent Department of Marine Biology for a TAMUG forum	
	Judge for undergraduate posters at Texas A&M University Student Research Symposium	
2012	Education volunteer at Dauphin Island Sea Lab Discovery Day	
	Volunteer scientist at Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo	
2009-2011	Assisted homeowner associations in monitoring oyster spat settlement across NC	
2008	Volunteer Educator at Fort Fisher Aquarium in NC	

Career Related Education

Fall 2015	ESRI Spatial Analysis using GIS	Online
Spring 2013	Coastal Ornithology, Gulf Coast Research Lab	ooratory Ocean Springs, MS
Spring 2011	Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences	St.George's, Bermuda
Spring 2010	James Cook University	Townsville, Queensland, Australia

Certifications

Department of Interior Motorboat Certification • Texas A&M Boat Operator Certification CPR/ AED and Standard First Aid Certification • Rescue Diver, PADI Dive Certification

Publications

Guo, H., C. Weaver, S. Charles, **A.A. Whitt,** S. Dastidar, P. D'Odorico, J. Fuentes, J.S. Kominoski, A.R. Armitage, S.P. Pennings (in prep). Coastal regime shifts: Rapid responses of coastal wetlands to changes in mangrove density.

Whitt, A.A., M.H. Posey, T. Alphin (2011). Interaction between estuarine shoreline stabilization and marsh thickness: an evaluation of key species and sediment characteristics in North Carolina's salt marshes. *University of North Carolina Wilmington Department of Biology and Marine Biology*, Senior thesis.

Presentations (As Presenter)

- **Whitt, A.A.,** W.E. Highfield, S.C. Pennings, A.R. Armitage (2015). Using citizen science to assess bird community composition responses to a changing Texas marsh-mangrove ecotone. Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF). Portland, OR. Presentation.
- Whitt, A.A., W.E. Highfield, S.C. Pennings, A.R. Armitage (2015). eBird's eye view of a changing marshmangrove ecotone in coastal Texas. University of Houston Ecology & Evolution Symposium. Poster.
- * Awarded Top 3 Unranked Poster Award
- Whitt, A.A., W.E. Highfield, S.C. Pennings, A.R. Armitage (2015). eBird's eye view of a changing marshmangrove ecotone in coastal Texas. Texas Bays and Estuaries Meeting. Port Aransas, TX. Poster.
- * Awarded 1st Place Poster
- Whitt, A.A. (2014). Maritime Industry Current Challenges: Perspectives from Marine Biology. Texas A&M University Galveston Campus' First Student Forum. Galveston, TX. Presentation.
- * Invited to present
- Whitt, A.A., A.R. Armitage, R. Morrison, M. Rathjen, A. Norris (2014). Migrating bird use of brackish marshes: Does restoration technique matter? Conference on Ecological and Ecosystem Restoration (CEER). New Orleans, LA. Poster.
- * Awarded 2nd Place Poster
- **Whitt, A.A.,** A.R. Armitage, S.C. Pennings (2014). Mangroves expanding into salt marshes: How will bird use of the Texas coastline be impacted? Texas A&M at Galveston Student Research Symposium. Galveston, TX. Poster.
- **Whitt, A.A.,** M.H. Posey, T. Alphin (2011). Salt marsh width impacts on representative sediment characteristics and key species in North Carolina. UNCW Undergraduate Research Showcase. Wilmington, NC. Poster.
- **Whitt, A.A.,** M.H. Posey, T. Alphin (2011). Estuarine shoreline stabilization effects on sediment grain size distribution in North Carolina's salt marshes. Colonial Academic Alliance. Hofstra, NY. Poster.
- Whitt, A.A., M.H. Posey, T. Alphin (2011). Estuarine shoreline stabilization effects on sediments in North Carolina's salt marshes. State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium. Raleigh, NC. Poster.
- **Whitt, A.A.,** B. Nicolaysen, S. Dorsey (2008). Student resolutions to community conflict: Bald Head Island fox populations and sea turtle nests. National Collegiate Honors Council. San Antonio, TX. Oral presentation.
- *Invited to present