

## **Marine conservation internship, Australia**

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During this summer I took part in an internship on the Great Barrier Reef in Cairns Australia after completing a semester abroad at the University of Tasmania. I interned with a company called Reef Teach, ([www.reefteach.com.au](http://www.reefteach.com.au)), who educate the public, school groups, dive masters and reef guides on the health of the Great Barrier Reef and the vast diversity of organisms found there. Using an initiative started by The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Reef Teach trained me in how to identify the main indicator species on the reef, using the software Eye On The Reef.

False information from the media is detrimental to the health of the Great Barrier Reef. During my internship we hosted a talk for a group of American children at summer camp. They believed, due to the media, that the major threat to the great barrier reef is sunscreen products. This information is false, and it distracts people from the major threat to the Great Barrier Reef which is climate change. After the reef suffered a mass bleaching event in 2017 from a major cyclone, an initiative called 'Coral Watch' is being used by dive masters and reef guides trained by Reef Teach to use colour charts whilst diving to record the colour of corals. This is data when recorded monitors the recovery rates of previously bleached sites or areas where coral bleaching still occurs. The software I used on my internship will be extremely useful for helping me apply to jobs future and the independent field work skills I learnt will help with my dissertation research.

Working on my internship in Cairns allowed me to take part in many dive trips enhanced by the many species identification tests I carried out. I saw many white, black tip reef sharks, grey reef sharks, a Wobbegong shark, green sea, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles, a few Maori Wrasse, many parrot fish and three Humpback whales. The diversity of marine life at the Great Barrier Reef is like nowhere else in the world, my internship has inspired me to start my dive masters and I want to carry out a season working as dive crew/ marine biologist on one of the tourist boats in Cairns.

