

2016

Christiane Howey Rising Scholar

To honor the life of Christiane Howey, her incredible dedication to our company, as well as her passion for conservation and helping researchers worldwide, we created the Rising Scholar Award in 2013 – an annual award to foster career development in researchers starting on their professional journeys.

We are pleased to announce the winner of the 2016 award: **Congratulations to Heather Marshall!**

This year, we are proud to grant our annual award to an enthusiastic, bright, and dedicated marine biologist. The caliber of applicants made the selection difficult, but it was Heather's ongoing dedication to fostering the next generation of scientists by which Christiane would be particularly impressed.

Heather's fascination with sharks began as a young girl when she saw a world record white shark brought into the docks of Montauk, NY, sparking a life-long interest that led her to college internships working with sharks at the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and Mote Marine Laboratory. After obtaining her BS at Smith College in 2005, Heather went on to obtain her MS in 2009 and PhD in 2014 from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Heather's graduate research focused on shark physiology and how these animals respond to the stress of capture from fishing gear. This work included the first assessment of post-release mortality in the dusky shark and revealed which blood characteristics may be the best predictors of survivorship for this species.

Heather is now a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Behavioral Ecology and Physiology Program at Mote Marine Laboratory. Her current work incorporates both blood physiology and tagging to study several shark species in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as a potentially vulnerable population of salmon sharks in Alaska, the project to which the X-Tags from this award will be applied.

Heather is also a co-founder and Science Team Coordinator of The Gills Club, an international group that works to connect girls with female marine biologists in the field, share knowledge, and empower them to take leadership positions and inspire others with their own passion for sharks. Heather engages in this outreach mission through social media, monthly Gills Club activities at Mote, and multiple expeditions, including white shark tagging in the Atlantic, and travels to Galapagos, Chile, and the Gulf of Mexico.

Interested in applying for the 2017 award?

See our upcoming Spring 2016 edition of Tracker News and our website for the call for proposals.



Photo by OCEARCH / R. Snow



Photo by Heather Marshall

MTI Employee Spotlight

Emily Tolentino – Data Analyst & Research Assistant

Q: What do you do here?

A: Eat snacks! Just kidding (though we all agree that MTI has great snacks). I'm responsible for processing the fish tag information, so I parse the data and translate it into a format that's easy to understand. Additionally, I have the opportunity to work with Lance and Lucy on tracking projects where I'll help with data analysis and preparation of the publications.

Q: Is there something specific you like about working at Microwave Telemetry?

A: In the five years that I've been here, I have learned new research and statistical methods. I love the challenge of finding patterns in the data and using them to discover motives for animal behavior. I've been a part of designing new data management strategies and have given my input when we're designing new products and analytical methods. I enjoy meeting other scientists and learning about their projects, but mostly, I love how we're like a little family here. The environment is so friendly and encouraging, and we get to eat cake when we have staff birthday celebrations!

Q: What is your life like outside of the office?

A: Pretty simple, I guess. Generally, I eat, sleep, and do homework. Right now, I'm attending Johns Hopkins to earn my master's degree in Applied and Computational Mathematics (isn't that a mouthful?), but when I'm free I'll go biking or spend time outdoors with my husband. I also love visiting my family in the Midwest.

Q: Do you have a favorite memory from your time here?

A: After working hard all year, the annual Christmas party is our chance to experience some camaraderie. We get to take a break and come together for fun, our Secret Santa gift exchange, and cookies!

Emily initially studied physics, but has since developed an interest in marine biology and data analysis. She takes pride in knowing that the studies she is involved in are aiding global conservation efforts. While your X-Tags are out to sea, rest assured knowing that your data will be in good hands.

