

End of Summer Reflection

This summer was one of the best summers I have had. I enjoyed learning and growing with the inspirational and caring team at the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy. It was most certainly a busy summer, but that does not take away from how much fun it was. Being able to go to my favorite spots in the world, the beaches, and talk about something I just had truly found love in, sharks, was amazing. I would not trade it in for anything.

The education team was so good at preparing all of us for everything we needed to know. I was shy at first as I have not taken any marine style classes at college and the other interns were so marine savvy. As soon as we first started learning on the first day, I fell in love with it. It was so much fun to actually learn about something I am passionate about. Also, to see the way everyone was so focused on learning and loving what they were doing was an experience I will never forget. I was so happy to love learning and I found myself retaining the information so easily because I wanted to know everything and more. By the time we were finished learning about the white shark and all of the history of the sharks in our local waters and beyond, I was so excited to go out and share my knowledge to everyone that wanted to hear.

Moving on from sharks, I was so lucky to have this opportunity in my local area of where I grew up. I am so happy that the conservancy is based in Chatham and is expanding so quickly. I learned so much about my home in the 3-4 weeks of training than I ever learned about Cape Cod before. It was such a fun experience and something I am so proud to have done. It truly has made me respect and understand Cape Cod so much more and makes me happy to call it home. The way we had so much experience as a team was what really helped. Abby and her amazing information at the national seashore walk, Josh and his walk up Fort Hill and all his birding knowledge, Will and his favorite hike in the marsh, and not to forget Haley's intern day of fun. All combined set us up for success to know the area we are talking about, but to also enjoy it and have fun while here on Cape Cod all summer long.

Next, we get into the shark smart program with Will. This was so much fun, being able to sit on the beach and be under the warm sun all day talking about the things you love. There is truly nothing like it. So many people would come up to us and thank us for all that we have done, and it was so nice to hear. Sometimes we would get those people who had a million questions and seemed to push on us a little harder but that was okay. We were prepared for the challenge, accepted it and crushed it. Then we would have the nervous parents and they were fun to talk to as you can see how easily they were affected by everything you say. Then the kids who would come up and ask what type of teeth the same tooth was a million times; this would always make Will and I look at each other and chuckle. Being able to talk to so many groups of people showed me that I truly loved working with younger children and how fun and energetic they are. Being able to see them learn and then grab their parents and then teach their parents about what they had just learned was amazing to watch. Overall shark smart was amazing and can not wait to see what the conservancy does to expand on it.

Then there is the amazing crew I got to see and work with every day. From Cynthia to Marianne to the interns to the volunteers, they were all amazing. It was so fun getting to know everyone that works for the conservancy, everyone is so nice and down to earth. It was a great environment to work in. My favorite part was how quickly we got so close. It just goes to show when you put passionate people together, strong bonds will be formed. The amazing team does not stop and is always looking to better themselves and the conservancy and it shows. It was a pleasure working with every single one of you.

Finally, we have some of my favorite memories. The first one being able to go and bring a porbeagle shark back to the center. I will always remember how it looked, felt, and smelled. I was so excited to be able to drive it back to the center. Another favorite moment was to be able to go out on a boat and see my first white shark. This was so amazing, and I am forever grateful for the conservancy and Andy for using his boat. Lastly was getting to see my sister Haley dissect a shark for me and the Merrill family. This was so exciting to see a shark dissection but even more so to see Haley in her teaching moment. I always wanted to see Haley as a teacher and I finally did and I will never forget the how bright her face was shining the whole time. I had an absolute amazing time this summer and can not thank the conservancy and everyone else who helped enough. Thank you for the best summer yet. Hope to work with you again soon.