

Internship at Hyltemossa research station

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My internship consisted of 8 weeks from the beginning of June to the end of August at Hyltemossa research station in Skåne, Sweden. This station is a part of the ICOS network and hosts both ecosystem and atmospheric measurement systems and collects a variety of measurements to be freely available through ICOS.

During the course of the internship I, and five other interns, performed tasks involved in the running of the station. These included performing 'regular' tasks like the collection of litter and sorting/ processing of it, it also included tasks that were not done as regularly like measuring above ground biomass and a larger project of soil sampling. We worked mostly at the station, but also partly at Geocentrum 2 at Lund University where we processed soil samples in a lab. Very interesting to be a part of was helping/ observing the regulars in building/ developing new methods such as testing a new method for LAI measurements, building a flux chamber and testing it in the forest, and experimenting with a ceptometer to estimate the LAI. We often were on our own with our tasks which was challenging in a good way, figuring out how things worked with the other interns.

I felt that much of what we went through at the station, I was familiar with in theory, but in real-life it was much different and where I had a vague knowledge of processes, now I feel much more familiar with the processes like all the instruments we used- knowing more about how to use them and what you can get out of them, and also ecosystem/ atmospheric processes in general- such as the carbon cycle and more about the forest ecosystem which made me feel connected to what I have learnt in previous courses in the bachelor degree.

The ICOS network was interesting to learn about, the system of data collection and distribution in Europe and how researchers may access that information. Since the station has existed for a while, we got to see and get information about the changes in data from year to year while being familiar with how this was collected in the first place. Being able to know what data was coming out while being in the area was fascinating. As an example, seeing measurements from 2018 when the summer was very dry and then seeing them for 2019 and relating this to the changes in the carbon flux.

I also had the opportunity to help phd student in taking BVOC measurements in regards to spruce trees and their stressors at the station. This was interesting because through talking to her and observing the work we did I could gain insight into what being a PhD student entails, I learnt many things from her that I did not know before about the PhD degree.

As a bachelor student in geography, I have often found it difficult to picture what paths may lie ahead after my studies, especially since I am also not sure what a lot of different paths actually entail. So for me, being in this internship was beneficial in terms of seeing a little into the world of research (eg, the PhD student), and the managing of the station. Since the station also has the option to host small projects and has such a variety of data, I also feel welcome there as an option to explore in terms of my bachelor thesis which I will start in the spring of 2020.