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*Summary Report*

*VT2 2017*

*The Alaska Whale Foundation*

I worked with the Alaska Whale Foundation (AWF) in Warm Springs Bay, Alaska. AWF is a nonprofit organization committed to research, education, and conservation of the coastal ecosystem, particularly cetaceans. I stayed at AWF's field station in Warm Springs Bay, a remote location on Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska, from April through July. I (1) conducted a spatial analysis project relating to euphausiid (krill) and humpback whale distribution, and (2) worked as a field assistant for a project on humpback whale diet. I split my time between the two projects, usually spending three days in the field and three days in the lab each week.

1. I am characterizing the 3D spatial and temporal distribution patterns of krill and developing a model to predict whale distribution based on krill. I used ArcGIS and R, drawing on knowledge from courses such as Spatial Analysis, GIS, Programming, and Modelling. This data analysis project will form the basis of my Master's thesis, with the end goal of publishing. The results of my project will contribute to the limited understanding of conditions in the area and help shape future research projects for AWF.
2. I worked as a field assistant on a project about humpback whale diet. We worked from an 18-foot, rigid hull inflatable zodiac and were often out for upwards of ten hours at a time in a variety of conditions. My duties on board included collecting GPS data, keeping field notes, taking identification photos and looking for whales. This was a highly rewarding experience and I am now more cognizant of cetacean research methods.

While working with AWF, I have experienced data collection and data analysis, both of which are important when working in the field of physical geography. I am excited to return to Lund and continue working with these datasets in the fall.