

Willow Dunster

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Marine Biology professional with interests in molecular ecology, cnidarian-dinoflagellate mutualisms and symbiosis, coral heterotrophy, ecophysiology, and anthropogenic impacts. Experience in molecular laboratory procedures, environmental DNA, coral husbandry, coral sampling, data management and analysis, AAUS scuba diving, and teaching. A self-directed and inquisitive lab member with strong communication, organization, and analysis skills.

EDUCATION

University of California Berkeley , Berkeley, CA	Sep 2024 - Pres.
PhD student, Environmental Science, Policy, and Management	
University of Rhode Island , South Kingston, RI	May 2023
B.S. in Marine Biology; Minor in Marine Affairs	
	GPA: 3.88

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Graduate Research Fellowship Program: Honorable Mention	National Science Foundation	Apr 2023
Academic Excellence Award in Marine Biology	University of Rhode Island	May 2023
(URI)^2 Undergraduate Research Grant	University of Rhode Island; \$1,200.00	Sep 2022
Biological Sciences Undergraduate Research Award	University of Rhode Island; \$450.85	Nov 2022
Centennial Scholarship	University of Rhode Island; \$13,500.00 / year	Sep 2019 – May 2023
Zenie Foundation Fellowship	Zenie Foundation; \$5,000.00 / year	Sep 2019 – May 2023

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Research Assistant I , URI, South Kingston, RI	Sep 2022 – May 2024
Advisor: Carlos Prada	
Caribbean conch whole genome sequencing, coral 16s amplification, coral field sampling	
Undergraduate Research Assistant , URI, South Kingston, RI	Dec 2020 – May 2023
Advisor: Carlos Prada, Taylor Lindsay	
Independent project: <i>Assessing symbiont plasticity across depth in <i>Orbicella faveolata</i></i>	
Coral physiology, ITS2 amplification and analysis, sediment eDNA, coral husbandry	
Coastal and Environmental Fellow , URI, South Kingston RI	May 2022 – Dec 2023
Advisor: Bradley Wetherbee	
Project: <i>Morphometric adaptations to different life histories in three Atlantic shark species</i>	
Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow	May 2021 – Jul 2021
Advisor: Carlos Prada	
Project: <i>eDNA shows fish diversity does not increase along a salinity gradient</i>	
Undergraduate Independent Research Credit	Sep 2020 – Dec 2020
Advisor: Bradley Wetherbee	
Project: <i>Whale shark global movement patterns review</i>	

PUBLICATIONS

Lindsay TR, **Dunster W**, McMahon KW, Prada C (2024). Light is critical for the distribution and trophic ecology of the temperate coral *Astrangia poculata*. *Reef Encounter*, 39(1), 61-65.

TALKS & CONFERENCES

Lindsay TR, **Dunster W**, Prada C (29 May 2024) Trophic plasticity in the facultatively mixotrophic coral *Astrangia poculata* across light environments. Temperate Coral Research Conference. Bristol, RI, USA.

Lindsay TR, **Dunster W**, Prada C (29 May 2024) Macroalgae and depth modulate the distribution of the temperate coral *Astrangia poculata*. Temperate Coral Research Conference. Bristol, RI, USA.

Lindsay TR, **Dunster W**, Prada C (19 Feb 2024) Energy optimization strategies in mixotrophic corals across light gradients. Ocean Sciences Meeting. New Orleans, LA, USA.

Dunster W, Wetherbee B (14 Dec 2022) Morphometric adaptations to different life histories in three

Atlantic shark species. Coastal and Environmental Fellows Poster Symposium. Kingston, RI, USA.

Dunster W, Lindsay TR, Prada C (31 July 2021) eDNA shows fish diversity does not increase along a salinity gradient. RI EPSCoR CAIM SURF Poster Symposium. Kingston, RI, USA.

SCIENCE EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant University of Rhode Island **Jan 2021 – Dec 2022**
Introduction to Marine Biology Laboratory; BIO 360 (3 semesters)

Shark Camp Staff University of Rhode Island **Jul 2022**
Supported Metropolitan Career and Technical Center students in handling fish, measuring sharks, recording data, and acclimating to a new environment

Aquarium Specialist Volunteer Save the Bay Aquarium, Newport, RI **Dec 2019 – Dec 2021**
Promoted ocean stewardship through touch tanks and interactive experiments

PROFFESIONAL SKILLS

Certifications: AAUS Scientific Diver, PADI Open Water Diver, NAUI First Aid/CPR/AED
Lab Skills: Library preparation, DNA extraction, coral sample processing, sample preparation
Field Skills: coral sampling
Technical Skills: Biological statistics, data entry and analysis, Bash, GitHub, Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint

LEADERSHIP

Varsity Women’s Swim and Dive Team, University of Rhode Island **Sep 2019 – May 2023**
Captain (2022-2023)
Student Athletic Advisory Committee (2019-2023)

Assistant Coach – Diving, Alamo Area Aquatics Diving, URI, Kingston, RI **Sep 2022 – May 2024**
Mentored athletes ages 7-13 in the basics of competitive springboard diving

COURSEWORK

Marine Science:

Coral Reef Ecology, Invertebrate Zoology, Marine Ecology, Intro to Marine Biology, General Oceanography, General Animal Physiology, Biology of Sharks

Data Sciences:

Intro to Data Statistics, Quantitative Methods (Statistics) in Marine Policy

Marine Policy:

Communication in Marine Affairs, Marine Pollution Policy, World Fishing

REFERENCES

Dr. Carlos Prada

University of Rhode Island Assistant Professor
prada@uri.edu

Dr. Bradley Wetherbee

University of Rhode Island Assistant Professor
wetherbee@uri.edu

Taylor Lindsay

University of Rhode Island Ph.D. Candidate
taylor_lindsay@uri.edu

2023

W. Dunster/CV/June 22,

Christopher Law
University of Rhode Island Assistant Coach – Diving
claw5136@uri.edu