

Scientist Spotlight



Elizabeth Robinson

Q1. What is your educational background?

I have a B.S. in Biology from Centenary College of Louisiana. I also received my M.S. in Biology from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. I am currently working on my Ph.D. from Louisiana State University in Oceanography and Coastal Science.

Q2. What inspired you to become a scientist?

My brother is hearing impaired. To overcome that impairment, my parents surrounded us with hands on activities and experiences. Those experiences ultimately lead to asking questions and finding answers. So naturally, becoming a scientist was an instinctive career option.

Q3. What is your role as a scientist for CWC?

I am a graduate student conducting research under Dr. Nancy Rabalais.

The Coastal Waters Consortium's mission is to assess the chemical evolution, biological degradation, and environmental stresses of petroleum and dispersant within Gulf of Mexico coastal and shelf ecosystems.



Q4. Can you describe what you enjoy the most about conducting scientific research?

I love the methodological process of conducting research. Research is like a jigsaw puzzle you have to put together, but there isn't a guiding picture. Unlike a real puzzle, science is a puzzle that is infinite, often providing more questions than answers. This creates a lot of freedom in designing research experiments. Often, you don't know what the answer will be until the research has been completed.

Q5. Can you summarize your oil spill research?

I am looking at how food web interactions are affected by sub-lethal concentrations of oil. Specifically, I am looking at how the chemosensory ability of predators and prey is altered by oil. If predators and prey can not detect each other in their environment, it may lead to changes in their distribution and abundance. To look at these interactions, I conduct field and lab experiments with blue crabs, periwinkle snails, and ribbed mussels.

