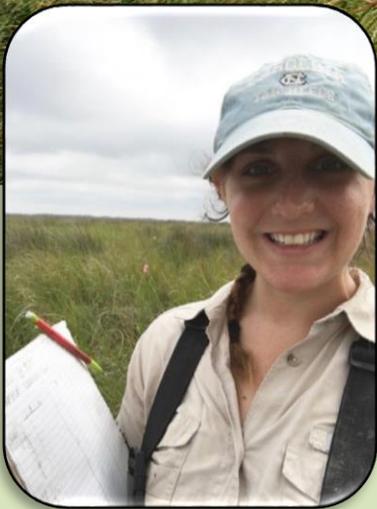


The Coastal Waters Consortium Presents: Scientist Spotlight



Shelby Ziegler

What is your educational background?

I received a B.S. in Biology in 2013 from the College of William and Mary. I am currently a Ph.D. student in the Curriculum for the Environment and Ecology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

What inspired you to become a scientist?

I had an amazing AP Biology teacher in high school. She gave us many opportunities to learn about science both in and out of the classroom. She was the first person to really show me that science is not always confined to a laboratory. Although I didn't know it at the time, the vast experiences I had in her class greatly influenced my pursuit of becoming an ecologist.

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

My favorite part of research is being out in the field doing the dirty work. Whether it is setting up an experiment, or collecting data, nothing beats a day covered in mud and sweat conducting the exciting science (even if it is rainy or exhausting).

What is your role as a scientist for CWC?

I am a PhD student working with a group of scientists from LSU, Rutgers and UNC to better understand how the oil spill affected fish communities and marsh food webs. I assist with field collections and plan and conduct experiments on predator-prey interactions at the salt marsh edge as part of my dissertation work.

Can you summarize your oil spill research and describe any surprising findings you have come across?

My research focuses on predator-prey interactions across various marsh systems. I ran tethering experiments to better understand predation rates at different marshes. At the time I conducted my study, there was no difference in predation between oiled and unoiled sites. This may indicate that the marshes have recovered as a food source for fish and crabs since the time of the spill.



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.