The Coastal Waters Consortium Presents:

Scientist Spotlight

Tyler Williams

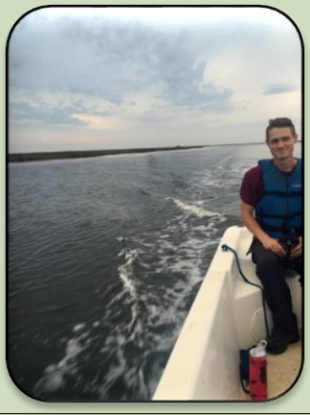
What is your role as a scientist for CWC?
I am a research associate in the Renewable Natural Resource Department at LSU. I am primarily responsible for organizing our field season and managing samples collected during that time. Currently I am using a spectrometer to measure the reflectance of Seaside Sparrow feathers collected from oiled and unoiled areas.

Can you summarize your oil spill research and describe any surprising findings you have come across?
Our research focuses on terrestrial vertebrates that call the marsh home. We work with Seaside Sparrows and Marsh Rice Rats to determine the long term impacts that oil exposure has on their health. I am most interested by our findings that show a link between oil exposure and reduced reproductive success for Seaside Sparrows.

What is your educational background?
I received my B.S. in Wildlife Biology at Virginia Tech in 2012. Since then I have been working as a field technician on various projects across the United States.

What inspired you to become a scientist?
When I was younger my father taught me how to disassemble household devices in order to fix them. He showed me how many small parts work together to create a larger functioning device. As I got older these lessons inspired me to start investigating the many parts that work together in nature. I know I cannot disassemble an ecosystem but I do use the critical thinking skills and lessons he taught me in order to pursue questions in ecology.

Can you describe what you enjoy the most about conducting scientific research?
I enjoy the challenge of scientific work. The physical and logistical challenge of collecting data in the field as well as analyzing that information in the lab. I also enjoy sharing my findings with the public and other researchers.



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.

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