

Reflection

This past summer, during the month of July and August, I interned at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The internship was a unique experience that introduced me to work force of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and helped me gain hands on experience in a professional setting.

Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge is a massive refuge, and requires a lot of field work to manage it. I was able to participate in some types of field work. The best thing about this internship would be that some days I would come into the refuge one morning, and would learn that we would be going out into the field. For example, some mornings we would go onto the beach to check out a sea turtle crawl to see if a nest had been laid, and if it had, we would mark the sea turtle nest. From this, I learned how to tell what species of sea turtle had come up onto the beach.

I also participated in a bird survey. For this, we spent the morning driving around the impoundments and recorded the species of birds and how many we saw. The second half of the day we spent driving down the beach. This was one of my favorite days because I learned about the different species of gulls and terns and how to identify them. We also saw 3 piping plovers, which are an endangered species.

On top of participating in field work, I learned how management at Back Bay works. I was taught how the impoundment system is used, and why this refuge is so important for migrating waterfowl. Being at the refuge allowed me to ask any questions I had and management was more than helpful when answering my questions and giving me information. A career day was held towards the end of my time at Back Bay, where the staff at Back Bay told us their own experiences while working for U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This was so helpful because they gave me a lot of advice on resumes, internships, and job applications.

The internship was a great experience, and I was so grateful for all the knowledge I gained as well as the help I received from Back Bay. If I could, I would go through this experience again.