



Staff Recommendation

October 6, 2022

2022 OPC Summer Interns Update

Jenn Eckerle, Deputy Director

Interns: Alyssa Jain, Gloria Jin, Thai Le, Jas Martin, Elizabeth Nguyen, Emily Zhao

In summer 2022, OPC hosted a cohort of six interns who helped advance priorities in [OPC's Strategic Plan to Protect California's Coast and Ocean](#) while gaining meaningful professional experience within state government. Alyssa Jain, Gloria Jin, Thai Le, Jas Martin, and Elizabeth Nguyen were selected for the second year of OPC's ten-week paid summer internship program, which is focused on providing undergraduate college students with the opportunity to build a foundational background and robust overview of California's coastal and ocean science, policy, and management work. Emily Zhao joined us through a merit-based award from the Haas Center for Public Service's Undergraduate Fellowships Program at Stanford University, the fifth year of an ongoing partnership between OPC and Stanford. During this informational item, each intern will provide a brief presentation on their projects. Additional details about their background and professional interests can be found below.

During their internship, each student worked closely as a team and with staff mentors on a set of 11 coast and ocean health indicators focused on sea level rise, ocean acidification and hypoxia, ocean warming, water recycling, coastal access, beach water quality, harmful algal bloom incidents, trash and microplastics, kelp, marine mammals, and sentinel species. The indicator trends and narratives will be presented in a final report at the December OPC meeting as part of the annual State of the Coast and Ocean Report (Annual Report). This initial set of indicators will also be shared on web-based dashboard early next year and will lay the foundation to meet OPC's long-term goal of developing a more comprehensive State of the Coast and Ocean Report Card by 2025. The interns also had opportunities to participate in programmatic efforts and broad agency support, including interagency meetings and communications development.

While the goal of OPC's summer internships is to provide students with an opportunity to increase their skills, knowledge and exposure to ocean and coastal

conservation in California, the benefit OPC has received from their effort is significant. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for these dynamic and dedicated students who will surely bring positive change to the future of ocean conservation.

Emily Zhao (she/her)



Emily Zhao is a sophomore at Stanford University pursuing a major in Environmental Systems Engineering. She has a special interest in food sustainability and environmental justice and hopes to learn more about urban planning and clean water in the coming years. During her internship with OPC, Emily worked with Senior Biodiversity Program Manager and Tribal Liaison Michael Esgro to create a Tribal Small Grants Program, drafting the staff recommendation and leading research and outreach to grantees. With Michael

Esgro and MPA Program Manager Lindsay Bonito, Emily also led research and reporting on long-term abundance indicators for bull kelp, giant kelp, sunflower sea stars, and ochre sea stars for the 2022 Annual Report.

Gloria Jin (she/her)



Gloria Jin is an undergraduate junior at the University of Southern California with a double major in Public Relations and Environmental Studies (Science and Management Concentration). Gloria has a special interest in the ways science and communications intersect, as well as local community engagement and outreach. During her summer with the OPC, Gloria worked closely with Stacy Hayden (Communications Manager) to increase public knowledge and understanding of the OPC's work

through social media. Gloria worked to draft and publish social media and blog posts for the "Ask the Researcher" webinar series, creating small graphics and icons, and improving accessibility. Additionally, she also worked to gather information and create a draft on the status of harmful algal bloom incidents on the California coast, which will be a part of OPC's 2022 Annual Report.

Thai Le (he/him)



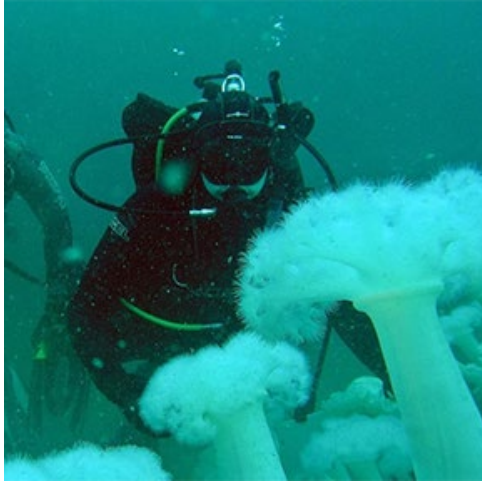
Thai Le is a junior at UC Riverside pursuing a degree in Environmental Sciences. With background and interest in water quality and microplastics, Thai spent the summer working with Kaitlyn Kalua, OPC's Water Quality Program Manager, to advance goals within OPC's strategic plan and statewide microplastics strategy. During his internship, Thai compiled demographic and scientific data to inform project solicitations that will help address marine debris, microplastic monitoring and regulation, and water quality in California. Additionally, Thai helped lead efforts to develop water quality indicators, including coastal wastewater recycling and beach water quality, which will be integrated into OPC's December 2022 Annual Report.

Elizabeth Thanh Tam Nguyen (she/her)



Elizabeth Nguyen is a recent graduate from UC San Diego with a B.S. in Marine Biology. From her experience as an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Community Engagement Fellow at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, she is interested in integrating EDI values with scientific research as well as advocating for black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. Elizabeth worked with Maria Rodriguez, OPC's Climate and Environmental Justice Manager, to develop the scope for a pilot Environmental Justice Small Grants Program. She researched current small grants programs and organized meetings with potential grantees to learn from previous structures and apply the expertise from organizations experienced working with underserved and under-resourced communities. Additionally, Elizabeth drafted a summary of California's coastal access through GIS analysis and literature review to develop an equity-focused indicator for OPC's 2022 Annual Report.

Jas Martin (they/them)



Jas Martin is a senior at Cal Poly Humboldt, studying fisheries biology. They have a special interest in marine conservation and sustainable aquaculture. During their time at OPC, Jas has worked with Lindsay Bonito (MPA Program Manager) and Mike Esgro (Senior Biodiversity Program Manager) to develop a database and synthesis report to aid in the progress of integrating California MPA monitoring data into fisheries management. This includes compiling information on goals of the Marine Life Protection

Act and Marine Life Management Act, CDFW fisheries management prioritized needs, and current statewide MPA monitoring methods. Jas also worked on compiling fisheries landings data to create a fisheries health indicator for the OPC 2022 Annual Report.

Alyssa Nazari Jain (she/her)



Alyssa Nazari Jain is a 4th year Environmental Studies student at UC Santa Barbara. During her summer internship at OPC, Alyssa was mentored by Justine Kimball (Senior Climate Change Program Manager) and worked with OPC's climate team. Her primary responsibility was coordinating progress on the indicators project by organizing meetings between OPC staff, interns, and agency partners, communicating with interns and mentors about specific indicators, and compiling notes and resources. Additionally,

Alyssa wrote reports summarizing trends on ocean warming, sea level rise, and biodiversity indicators. These reports included background on each indicator, historical and current trends, and a narrative analyzing the data. She then created an outline and draft narrative to translate this information into the 2022 Annual Report. Alyssa also participated in discussions reviewing Letters of Intent for Prop 68 in order to learn about the grant application process.