Kelly Douglas

Kelly’s Major: Biology, Environmental Studies

Program: SFS Marine Resource Studies, Summer

Academic Life: The summer session is a little more compact than the semester would be, as you might expect. Our three resident professors in the center each used their very different focuses to teach our summer course: Marine Protected Area Management and Planning. On average, about four hours of our day was devoted to lecture time, although not all of that was spent in the classroom. Some of our lecture times were taken as field trips. For example, we got a tour of the island with the historical context, as well as a tour of one of the local fisheries and the processing plant! We had an organism identification exam in the water, a few papers, and a final exam to complete.

Kelly’s Fieldwork: We spent about four days in the field taking abundance counts of fish species in the area. Some of the other measurements included coral species counts, habitat composition and invertebrate counts. Outside of the research that we did on our own, we had the opportunity to assist in the professors’ research. Although our session only spent a small portion of our time abroad doing field research, it was an invaluable experience. It was a little taste of research in the field that I would never had experienced at UW-Madison.

Advice for Someone Considering this Program: In the Center for Marine Resource Studies, I spent 30 days learning and taking in the culture with only 30 other people. Not only were the experiences in the water beyond amazing, but the community was extremely welcoming as well. The center hosted outreach activities each Saturday where we did activities with the kids on the island like teaching swim lessons. When we would go into the community someone was always willing and VERY eager to talk to us and help us experience the culture on the island. I made friends with the islanders and created friendships with the other students that I will never forget.

“The friends that I made in South Caicos are friends that I will have for the rest of my life.”