

Milena Nescic

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EDUCATION

Florida Atlantic University- Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, Fort Pierce, FL

M.S. Marine Science & Oceanography

Expected graduation: 2025

University of South Florida, Judy Genshaft Honors College, Sarasota, FL

B.S. Biology

May 2022

GPA: 3.65, cum laude

Relevant Coursework: Biology, General Chemistry & Lab, Organic Chemistry & Lab, General Physics, General Physiology, Coastal Ecology, Marine & Freshwater Toxins

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of South Florida, Judy Genshaft Honors College, Sarasota, FL

Mentor: Dr. Paul A. Kirchman

Honors thesis, 2020 – 2021: *“Examining the Effects of Inoculum Size, Nutrient Concentration, and Soil Sample Origin on Bacterial Colonies Derived from a Gopher Tortoise Burrow”*

Performed environmental sampling and water extraction of soil; Prepared agar media and cell cultures; Counted colony forming units (CFUs) and visually assessed phenotypic variations; Statistically analyzed data gathered using Mann-Whitney U test.

WORK & INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Coral Reef Health and Ecology Lab, FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, Fort Pierce, FL

Summer Internship (June 2023- Aug 2023)

Dual Program Internship, Mote Marine Laboratory, Summerland Key, FL

Coral Health and Disease Laboratory (October 2022 – December 2022)

Worked with Coral Resilience program utilizing aseptic techniques to extract and measure soluble host protein concentrations; Gained experience harvesting coral tissue via flame-sterilized razorblades and airbrushing; Prepared coral tissue samples using mechanical and chemical cell lysis procedures to perform DNA extractions of over 300 samples; Verified DNA concentration and purity per sample using NanoDrop UV spectrophotometer; Tracked coral growth rates and fusion behavior using ImageJ to measure surface area; Performed general lab maintenance, inventory, data entry, and organization of DNA isolates; Began learning R and the Galaxy Coral SNP platform.

Coral Restoration (August – October 2022)

Performed daily husbandry tasks in open-system aquarium at land-based nursery; Conducted health checks to mitigate disease outbreak and pests as needed; Micro-fragmented primarily *Acropora palmata* brood stock using bandsaw as an asexual reproduction technique to multiply numbers of specimens slated for eventual outplanting in *in-situ* nursery; Assisted in production of equipment needed to facilitate outplanting; Collected and logged water quality parameter data; Participated in Loggerhead Marinelife Center's "Unwrap the Waves" initiative held by Mote Marine's ECommittee to collect Halloween candy wrappers for recycling.

Peer Tutor, University of South Florida, Sarasota, FL (January 2022 – May 2022)

Introduction to Chemistry, General Chemistry I, and General Chemistry I Lab

Met with students and discussed educational goals and expectations; Stressed importance of good study habits by encouraging students to create personalized study plans; Used positive reinforcement, repetition, and review to help students master challenging material; Collaborated with students to complete assignments, identify lagging skills, and correct weaknesses.

Gopher Tortoise Conservation Internship, University of South Florida, Sarasota, FL

Cross-College Alliance Environmental Discovery Awards Program (EDAP), (Summer 2021)

Performed habitat surveys to evaluate composition of soil and vegetation; Improved habitat via mitigation of overgrowth and nuisance plant species; Identified and mapped tortoise burrow locations using GIS software; Utilized trail cameras to monitor local wildlife activity; Collaborated with colleagues to develop educational outreach projects for community engagement.

MEMBERSHIP

University of South Florida Biology Club, Vice-President (2020 – 2022)

National Society of Leadership and Success, Member (2019 – Present)