



Informational Item
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Item 4

2024 OPC Summer Internship Program

2024 Summer Interns: Mina Adabag, Lawrence Chen, Leah Hawkins,
Arianna Lawrence, Anushka Vijay

In summer 2024, OPC hosted a cohort of five undergraduate 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. Mina Adabag, Lawrence Chen, Leah Hawkins, Arianna Lawrence were selected for the fourth 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, professional experience, and robust overview of California’s coastal and ocean science, policy, and management work. Anushka Vijay joined OPC through a merit-based award from the Haas Center for Public Service’s Undergraduate Fellowships Program at Stanford University, the sixth year of an ongoing partnership between OPC and Stanford.

While the goal of OPC’s summer internship program is to provide students with an opportunity to increase their skills, knowledge, and exposure to ocean and coastal conservation in California, the contributions to OPC’s work by this year’s internship cohort has been 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.

Mina Adabag

Mina Adabag is a rising sophomore at University of California, Berkely studying Molecular Environmental Biology. During her time at OPC, Mina worked with 30x30 Program Manager, Abby Mohan, primarily researching major threats and pressures of California marine ecosystems to inform efforts to advance California’s goal of conserving 30 percent of the state’s land and waters by 2030 (30x30). Mina is passionate about environmental justice and is pursuing ecological research and conservation planning.





Lawrence Chen

Lawrence Chen is a senior at UC Davis studying Marine and Coastal Sciences with an emphasis on Marine Ecology and Organismal Biology. He is interested in fisheries ecology and management, particularly in the face of changing ocean conditions. During his summer with OPC, Lawrence supported Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Program Manager, Katie Cieri in the development of OPC’s Climate-Ready Fisheries Strategy. To inform the development of this Strategy,

Lawrence met with academic, agency, NGO, and community science partners, and completed a literature review. Lawrence also worked alongside 30x30 Program Manager, Abby Mohan to tailor international guidance on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and fisheries to support California’s goal to conserve 30 percent of the state’s land and waters by 2030 (30x30). This project included hosting a workshop with academic partners to evaluate the role of fisheries in the 30x30 process. His experience at OPC has motivated him to continue to explore marine policy through the lens of fishery climate resilience.

Leah Hawkins

Leah Hawkins is a senior at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo where she studies Marine Sciences. This summer, she worked closely with OPC’s Climate and Environmental Justice Program Manager, Maria Rodriguez and Better World Group to finalize the Environmental Justice Advisory Board’s charter and the facilitate their recent meeting. In addition, she supported OPC’s Water Quality Program Manager, Christine Sur by crafting thoughtful recommendations to inform the next iteration of California’s Ocean Litter Strategy. Her time at OPC has further inspired her to pursue a career focused on the intersectionality of ocean conservation and equity.



Arianna Lawrence

Arianna is a junior at Pomona College, where she is studying Public Policy Analysis with a concentration in Environmental Analysis. Working with Climate Change Program Manager, Ella McDougall and the OPC Climate team, Arianna had the opportunity to support the Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Grant Program, write policy briefs on sector-specific microplastics, and advance the Beach Resiliency Plan. Arianna plans to pursue a JD and specialize in environmental law, eventually leading to a public service career in environmental planning policy.



Anushka Vijay

Anushka Vijay is a junior at Stanford University studying Earth Systems with a concentration in Human Environmental Systems, and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. During her summer at OPC, Anushka worked with Marine Protected Area Network Manager, Staci Lewis. Her research helped advance the development of OPC’s Community Science Strategy and Human Dimensions Research Agenda to strengthen opportunities for public participation and understanding of human-ocean relationships through holistic coast and ocean management. Her work with OPC has encouraged her to seek a future career path in equity in coast and ocean management, amplifying underserved voices in marine stewardship.