



Marine Biology, B.S.

Using the nearby Pacific Ocean and North Coast as a living lab, students gain real-world experience on and in the ocean, beaches, and other marine habitats to study marine organisms and ecosystems. Students take advantage of excellent facilities, such as Cal Poly Humboldt's own marine lab and ocean-going research vessel to conduct research directly with faculty.

Experience Your Learning

Just minutes away from the ocean, estuary, and lagoon habitats, Cal Poly Humboldt and its outstanding facilities provide students with research opportunities to work with living marine organisms.

Many classes take advantage of the Telonicher Marine Lab, just north of campus. The lab pumps, filters, and recirculates seawater from the Pacific into tanks to keep marine organisms alive.

First-year, first-time students will be automatically enrolled in Rising Tides for Marine Biology and Oceanography majors. One of several place-based learning communities at Cal Poly Humboldt, this year-long program of science and general education (GE) courses and activities focuses on understanding the cultural and ecological nature of local coastal habitats.

Undergraduate students have access to excellent facilities and conduct research with faculty and interact with NOAA scientists—experiences normally reserved for graduate students.

With Humboldt Bay experiencing the fastest rate of rising sea levels on the West Coast, students also have the unique opportunity to study three climate change threats to marine habitats and biodiversity: sea level rise, ocean acidification, and marine heat waves.

Did you know?

- Humboldt sits on the North Coast, a unique and pristine stretch of coastal California where you can find marine ecosystems not easily found elsewhere in the state.
- Students have access to seven marine ecosystems: salt marshes, rocky shore, kelp forests, sandy beach, deep sea, lagoons, and estuaries.
- Approximately 80 percent of students who pursue Marine Biology at Humboldt enter Humboldt's Scientific Diving program.



Academics & Options

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The Marine Biology curriculum includes a rigorous set of required courses that span the breadth of the field, including Zoology, Botany, Phycology (marine algae), Invertebrate Zoology (sponges to sea urchins), Oceanography, Intertidal Ecology, Biological Oceanography, Marine Biology, and Evolution.

Get Involved

Students have the opportunity to support researchers of Cal Poly Humboldt's Marine Mammal Stranding Program. Part of NOAA's national Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program network, the MMSP at Cal Poly Humboldt collects data on stranded marine mammals and, in some cases, performs a necropsy to learn more about the biology of the species and the health of the population and ocean habitat.

The Biological Sciences department offers several credit-bearing research and internship opportunities that count towards the Marine Biology degree, including BIOL 498 Marine Biology Capstone Research and BIOL 499 Directed Studies or Science Education Internship. Your academic advisor can provide you with additional information.

Undergraduate students often present their research at national conferences such as The Western Society of Naturalists conference, the Ecological Society of America and more.

Cal Poly Humboldt's popular research and project showcase, ideaFest, features more than 400 student, staff, and faculty activities from the past year.

The Zoology Club welcomes students from any major who share an appreciation for and curiosity about animals! Activities include monthly meetings with guest speakers who discuss their research experiences with animals or from Humboldt resources that can help you achieve your academic, professional, or personal goals. The club organizes fundraisers to support field trips to learn more about zoology.



Careers

Many students go on to graduate school and Ph.D. programs, and eventually pursue careers in marine sciences and related fields. Whatever you decide to do, you'll be well-prepared for that next step in life.

- Marine Biologist
- K-12 Science Teacher/Professor
- Field Biologist
- Aquarium Educator/Manager/Husbandry
- Field and Laboratory Technician
- Environmental Planners and Scientists
- Researchers/Research Associates
- Scientific Diver
- Science Writers / Scientific Illustrator
- Biotechnology Research Technician

