

Diego Norena

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Junior in Environmental Science with a global perspective fueled by an unwavering commitment to environmental protection. I am dedicated to environmental preservation and adept at using multimedia tools such as photography and videography to convey scientific findings and foster agency and community engagement. My experiences include leading data collection projects, assisting in wildlife research, and creating impactful educational content. Proficient in English and Spanish, I bring strong interpersonal skills, independence, and a passion for integrating science with art to promote environmental stewardship and awareness.

EDUCATION

University of Alaska Southeast - Juneau, AK

Expected Graduation: May of 2026

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science.

Semester by the Bay – Homer, AK

- Occupational Endorsement Certificate in Conservation Ecology.

University of Dayton - Dayton, OH

8/2022 - 12/2023

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Geoscience, Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology.
GPA: 3.88/4
- Transferred to University of Alaska Southeast to complete my undergraduate education.

EXPERIENCE

Winged Whale Research Non-Profit, Intern, Kachemak Bay, AK

1/2024 - 5/2024

- Conducted photo identification of humpback whales and harbor porpoises to enhance long-term whale records.
- Organized and scanned historical whale fluke photographs to update identification catalogs from 1980-1900.
- Led public outreach initiatives, including designing flyers and managing social media campaigns aimed at reducing whale strikes during the King Salmon Derby and general boat traffic.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Research Assistant – Homer, AK

2/2024 - 5/2024

- Trained in radio telemetry for wildlife tracking.
- Participated in goose banding efforts and identified key migration sites for species Cackling, Canada, Snow, and Greater White-fronted Geese.
- Assisted in baiting, trapping, and banding geese to track migration patterns from Homer to Alaska's North Slope, contributing to a more extensive study by ADF&G to discover unknown breeding locations.

Alaska Beluga Monitoring Program, Research Assistant – Kenai River, AK

1/2024 - 5/2024

- Conducted shore-based monitoring of endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales as part of NOAA Fisheries' community science initiative.
- Collected standardized observational data on beluga distribution and behavior at key feeding sites to support ongoing research and conservation efforts.

Skeleton Articulation, Assistant – Homer, AK

3/2024 - 4/2024

- Assisted in the articulation of a harbor porpoise skeleton under the guidance of world-renowned marine mammal skeletal expert Lee "Boneman" Post.
- Gained hands-on experience in anatomical reconstruction and skeletal preservation techniques.
- Contributed to the accurate assembly of the skeleton for educational and scientific display purposes.

Kachemak Bay Birders - Annual Sea Duck Survey and Shore Bird Monitoring, Volunteer – Kachemak Bay, AK

2/2024 - 5/2024

- Engaged in the Kachemak Bay Sea Duck Survey and Shore Bird Monitoring programs, contributing to data collection on overwintering sea ducks and migratory shorebirds using Kachemak Bay as a migratory stopover, respectively.
- Supported the Kachemak Bay Birders Monitoring efforts, a community science-based organization that has collected data for over 15 years.

University of Alaska Anchorage - Intertidal Zone Surveys, Lead project coordinator – Kachemak Bay, AK 4/2024

- Led the 2024 Intertidal Zone Surveys in Kachemak Bay, overseeing all aspects of data collection and team coordination.
- Managed data collection across randomized transects at two distinct locations, focusing on species diversity, abundance, and distribution of intertidal life. Also collected data on water quality.
- Contributed to a long-term monitoring project aimed at assessing and understanding the changes in intertidal ecosystems in Kachemak Bay over time.

Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST), Volunteer – Kachemak Bay, AK 3/2024

- Assisted in the collection of data related to beach cast birds, marine debris, and human impacts on the beach environment.
- Contributed as a volunteer with COASST, a citizen science project managed by the University of Washington, focused on coastal ecosystems and marine conservation.

University of Alaska Anchorage, Research, Vessel Impact Biodiversity and Abundance of Marine Invertebrates in the Homer Harbor – Homer, AK 2/2024 - 5/2024

- Conducted study on vessel impact on marine invertebrates in Homer Harbor.
- Compared invertebrate abundance and diversity at high vs. low boat traffic sites.
- Collected data using quadrats and GoPro's.
- Found reduced biodiversity and abundance in high vessel traffic areas suggesting negative impacts of boat traffic on marine ecosystems.

KBBI Radio, Science Fridays, Interviewee – Homer, AK 5/2024

- Participated in multiple Science Friday segments at KBBI, Homer's local radio station, where I discussed various scientific projects occurring in Homer/Kachemak Bay related to marine and environmental science.
- Shared personal journalism stories about Kachemak Bays' wildlife, highlighting the significance of local research and community involvement in environmental conservation. Those stories can be found at diegonorena.biz/Alaska-postcards

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Alaska Conservation Postcards, Personal Project

- Developed a multimedia project to raise climate change awareness, featuring postcards with insights on local changes and their global impact.
- Utilized photography and videography skills to visually document and convey scientific, cultural, and personal information about sea otters, sea ducks, and Dall sheep.
- Crafted engaging content to inform and educate the public about climate change effects and conservation efforts in Alaska.

North Waters Outdoor Leadership Training Program, Albany River, ON 7/2023 - 8/2023

- 30-day canoe trip traveling over 1,000 km with a focus on building leadership skills, including team building, decision-making under stress, problem-solving, strategic thinking, navigation, white water safety, and wilderness first aid.

North Waters and Langskib, Canoe camp 6/2022 - 7/2022

- 22-day canoe trips focusing on physical and mental resilience, teamwork, communication, and outdoor survival.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

- Birding Club, member – University of Alaska Southeast
- Sustainability Club, member - University of Alaska Southeast
- Office of Environmental Geosciences and Biology Ambassador – University of Dayton
- Sustainability Club, member – University of Dayton
- Student Government Association Sustainability Committee, member – University of Dayton