

## **Andros Island, Bahamas Marine Survey Expedition**

I took part in the Bahamas marine conservation programme in January 2009, and from the 10 weeks that I was on Andros I learnt a lot of skills that will be helpful for the future. I am currently on a Biology course at Oxford Brookes and I definitely think that taking part in this programme helped to get me my place on the course.

Through the ten weeks that I was out there team work was definitely one of the key things that helped the programme run smoothly and allowed us to get the data that we needed. From learning all the scientific knowledge of all the marine animals to helping the camp run smoothly with cooking meals, keeping camp tidy and looking after all the diving equipment it definitely wouldn't have worked so well without us working as a team. We did lots of team building exercises to help this happen which also helped us to get to know each other as a group. Diving in buddies is also a good example of the team work that was used out there as without this system I'm sure many people wouldn't feel as safe and comfortable as they did when diving, it also made collecting data a lot easier as there were many things to think about to begin with it was easier to be able to share these things with your buddy, so one of you did the navigating and the other would hold the flotation device.

I also feel that you gain a lot of experience in leadership out there, especially in teaching at the schools as the children can be a little overpowering to begin with and you learn quickly that you have to be confident in order to control the class. I also found it was shown when some of us found the learning of all the marine life easier than others, we decided to come up with ways in which to help the rest of the group to learn them which included taking pictures of all the fish and coming up with names or stories which helped them to remember them.

I definitely feel that this programme helped me to grow as a person and provided me with skills that future employers will see are valuable when I go for interviews, including having to communicate with the other volunteers and the project leaders to get the most out of the programme and help things run smoothly for everyone and being able to get on and work with a wide range of people of all ages.

I definitely enjoyed my time on Andros and would definitely go back, I feel this programme is very worthwhile as the marine life out there is spectacular and should definitely be kept that way. I feel that the teaching we do in the school is fun for the children and helps them to understand about the place that they live in and how to protect that area to keep it as beautiful as it is now.