

Master's Opportunity at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, CA: Recovery of Pismo clams

The [Ruttenberg Lab](#) at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo has funding for a master's student to work on the next phases of a project exploring the dynamics of Pismo clams, with an emphasis on Pismo Beach. The student would be based in San Luis Obispo, CA, with some travel required to local field sites, as well as potentially sites throughout California. More information about the Cal Poly Biology Graduate Program is available here: <http://bio.calpoly.edu/content/grad-degrees>.

Pismo clams (*Tivela stultorum*) were once abundant in California and in San Luis Obispo County. Our lab group has been studying their ecology (and recovery!) for nearly 10 years (see [lab webpage here](#)), and there is significant local and statewide interest in their population dynamics and the potential recovery of the fishery. The main work for this project will include leading the ongoing field monitoring and mark-recapture programs, helping mentor and manage a large team of undergraduate researchers, engaging in outreach, and partnering with project collaborators in other regions. The graduate student will be able to explore several interesting research questions, including (but not limited to): spatial patterns and habitat use, effects of oceanography, recruitment, population genetics, impacts of predators, dynamics in the subtidal (likely requiring scuba), potential fishery and poaching impacts, aquaculture, and others.

Funding for the project includes in-state tuition and stipend for two years, and costs related to field work and travel; additional funding for student stipend may be available and opportunities will also be available to obtain support as a teaching assistant/lab instructor in the Biological Sciences Department at Cal Poly. Note: there may be additional private donor support available for California residents of financial need.

The ideal student would have many of the following qualifications:

1. Experience conducting shore-based/intertidal fieldwork, including organizing field logistics
2. Experience managing teams of students/assistants
3. Experience with outreach and science communication with public audiences
4. Excellent oral and written communication skills
5. Experience/skills with statistics, data management, and data analysis; experience with software packages such as R strongly preferred but not required
6. CA residency advantageous (but not required) since tuition funds only cover in-state tuition (but out-of-state tuition waivers are available for strong candidates)
7. Minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA (higher **strongly** preferred)

Interested candidates are strongly encouraged to read lab (and other) publications on Pismo clams, and then [submit their information here](#), including a *brief* description of qualifications, interest in the Cal Poly MS program, the project, and a short CV (2 pages max), all as a **single** PDF file (with the title 'LastName_Firstname.pdf'). Please include GPA, experience with lab work, fieldwork and organizing logistics, data analysis experience, etc., and names and contact information of at least 3 references.

For more information, contact Dr. Benjamin Ruttenberg (bruttenb 'at' calpoly 'dot' edu).

Application deadline for Cal Poly is Feb 1.

