



Durham University  
**St Mary's College**  
Travel Bursary Report Form Pro Forma

Name: Charlotte Hopkins    Degree: Zoology with Industrial Placement  
Year of study: 4th

Amount awarded: £120    Total cost of trip: £2500    Duration of trip: 6 weeks

**Brief summary of project:**

Over the summer I participated in a DUCK organised expedition for Coral Cay Conservation. The project was based at the Napantao Dive Resort on the remote eastern side of Sogod Bay, South Leyte, Philippines. As a volunteer I was actively involved in community projects to conserve coral reefs in the area and provide education as to their benefits and importance on both a local and global scale.

**Brief description of activities:**

Whilst on site with Coral Cay, as a volunteer, I participated in a variety of tasks. The beginning of the expedition, consisted of dive training whereby all volunteers were trained to PADI Advanced Open Water level. On completion, myself and the other volunteers were then trained in marine scientific surveying techniques and species identification through daily lectures and related dives with an instructor. Important target species which are indicative of reef health were highlighted. After all the training had taken place, we were then able to participate in marine surveying to complete a comprehensive assessment of marine resources and species in the area. Other activities included participating in organised beach clean ups and helping prepare for a local ocean festival by creating posters highlighting the importance of coral reefs.

Coral reefs are biodiverse ecosystems that provide food, storm protection, and livelihoods to millions of people worldwide. Therefore, the continued surveying of coral reefs in the area, is of vital importance in order to establish key areas needing protection. The project also includes liaising with the local community to raise awareness of central issues, as a key aspect of the conservation work. By involving local people in conservation and providing education, it is hoped that sustainable use of natural resources can be implemented.

**Personal development statement:**

My future career plans are to become actively involved in conservation, focusing on marine issues. As such this expedition was highly beneficial experience. I gained frequent experience of team work, particularly whilst scuba diving, where there is a high degree of responsibility both for yourself and others. I now have invaluable marine surveying experience to aid me in further studies.



1. "Daily dive"  
Giving the O.K. signal ready to get in the water for a daily science dive.



2. "Arts and Crafts"  
Whilst on camp, there were plenty of opportunities to get involved in community projects such as making posters for the local ocean festival



3. "Underwater world"  
A completely different world under the water; as volunteers we were lucky enough to enjoy some of the best diving in the world, seeing species such as: black tip reef sharks, green turtles, titan trigger fish, and an abundance of coral species and other reef fish.