



## **TETHYS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

*preserving the marine environment through research,  
public awareness and education*

### Collaborating with Tethys

A career in marine mammal science requires a lot of motivation and it may feel frustrating to some.

Before getting fully engaged in this field, you may want to participate in one of our expeditions and see if this kind of work actually meets your expectations and skills.

#### **Internships / thesis projects**

Since 1986, the Tethys Research Institute has supported the thesis work of several students. Some of them have become steady collaborators of Tethys and are now acting as student advisors themselves. If you would like to apply for an internship with the Tethys Research Institute please check our guidelines carefully.

#### Guidelines for internships with the Tethys research institute

The candidate who wants to do a research internship and a thesis with the Tethys Research Institute should have at least the following prerequisites: 1) a fair knowledge of English and 2) basic computer skills and knowledge of the most widespread software packages.

#### Evaluation period

Before being accepted as an intern student, usually the candidate spends a variable period of time actively collaborating in research activities conducted by Tethys, to gain experience and identify a possible thesis subject. This preliminary phase may allow the potential Tethys supervisor to evaluate the specific skills and the motivation of the candidate. Moreover, it will enable the candidate to appreciate any difficulties related to cetacean research and make sure that they are ready to take the challenge.

At the end of the evaluation period, if the candidate has the necessary skills, a possible thesis subject may be identified together with a Tethys supervisor.

A candidate who is already possessing appropriate experience is not required to undergo an evaluation period, and may be accepted based on the evaluation of the Tethys (co)advisor\*.



## Thesis proposal

Once a preliminary thesis subject and a methodology have been defined, the candidate should write a short (normally 4-6 pages) but detailed thesis proposal to be presented to the Tethys Board of Directors. The proposal also serves to evaluate the candidate's skills in scientific writing (in English or Italian as appropriate) and literature search.

The thesis proposal, written in collaboration with the Tethys supervisor, should include: thesis draft title, background, objectives, methods, expected results, feasibility (including budget and funding opportunities), supervisor, other personnel involved in field research and data analysis, time table, and a preliminary literature review.

The proposed research methodology and objectives should meet the ethical policy of Tethys.

If the thesis proposal is positively appraised by the Tethys Board of Directors, the candidate is accepted as an intern student with Tethys.

The student is then entitled to submit the thesis proposal to their University advisor (or committee). If the proposal is modified, the student should send it again to Tethys for formal re-evaluation (indicating where and how it was modified, and the reasons thereof).

The intern student, as well as their advisor representing the University, must print and sign the statements below. If these two statements are not signed and given back to Tethys the thesis proposal cannot be accepted.

### Statement (Candidate)

*I, (FIRST NAME - FAMILY NAME), born in (PLACE) on (DATE) hereby accept that the data used for the purposes of my thesis, as described in the attached thesis proposal, belong to the Tethys Research Institute. I understand that I am not entitled to publish or publicly present such information or to otherwise use the data for publishing or other purposes without the written consent of Tethys. Any use of the data other than for my own thesis must be agreed in writing with Tethys.*

*Date, Signature of Candidate*

ENCLOSURES: 1) Thesis proposal; 2) Cover letter to the Tethys Board of Directors with a formal request to be accepted as an intern student.

### Statement (University Advisor, Tethys Advisor)

*With the present letter I, (FIRST NAME - FAMILY NAME), in my quality of thesis Advisor for the student (FIRST NAME - FAMILY NAME) on behalf of the University of (NAME, PLACE), hereby agree that the thesis (TITLE) as described in the thesis proposal by the student will be conducted in collaboration with the Tethys Research Institute and supervised by Dr. (FIRST NAME - FAMILY NAME) on behalf of Tethys. I understand that original data provided by the Tethys Research Institute can be used and analyzed for the purposes of the thesis, but entire sets or original data cannot be made*



*available through the thesis. Data ownership rests with the Tethys Research Institute and any use of the data for scientific publications or for purposes other than the thesis itself will need to be agreed in writing with the Tethys Research Institute.*

*Date, Signature of University Advisor Date, Signature of Tethys Advisor*

The intern student must report to Tethys any limitation or condition for data use and/or publishing that may be required by their University or thesis advisor.

## Thesis work

Tethys interns are normally unpaid, but they may be given a partial refund of their running expenses, depending on the project budget.

Tethys interns must have an insurance that covers any risks related to their work with Tethys. Such insurance is normally provided by the University. Tethys interns must inform their Tethys supervisor in writing about their insurance coverage and duration. Intern students without an insurance cannot participate in the field work. An insurance may be provided by Tethys upon request.

Tethys interns participating in field activities are normally asked to contribute to all aspects of the research programme, including the upkeep of materials, house- or boat-keeping, cooking, dealing with paying volunteers etc.

For independent studies, and whenever necessary, the student must obtain the necessary authorization and permits required for the area in which they propose to conduct their research prior to initiating the field work.

## The final thesis

The final thesis must be approved by the Tethys supervisor in writing before presentation to the University.

At the beginning of the thesis, the following statement should appear: "This thesis was done in collaboration with the Tethys Research Institute". "Personal communication", "Tethys unpublished data" and similar ways of presenting unpublished information are acceptable only if the persons and institutes involved have approved such citations in writing.

## After the thesis

While Tethys retains the property of any data provided to intern students, graduates are normally encouraged to publish their thesis work (in toto or in part) after the thesis, or to further develop their work until it is published, in collaboration with the Tethys supervisor and other co-authors as appropriate. Conditions for the publishing of data belonging to Tethys will depend on the specific written agreement made between the author of the thesis and Tethys for the purposes of data publishing.



To apply for internships with the Tethys Research Institute, please contact [tethys@tethys.org](mailto:tethys@tethys.org).

Please read the guidelines above carefully before applying, and make sure that you have a strong motivation.

## **Ph.D. research**

There are rather few scientists studying cetaceans who are in a position to supervise graduate students, and there is a great deal of interest from potential students. This means that there is considerable competition. Studying cetaceans is difficult and less rewarding (in results per unit time) than research on most other kinds of animals. There are also very few jobs for those with graduate degrees in cetacean work, so it is only for the truly committed.

A few senior researchers from Tethys may be willing to supervise graduate students, provided that students have appropriate experience and skills. To be seriously considered, a student should also have a full scholarship from an external source covering her/his own costs.

Potential students with mathematical / statistical / modelling / computing skills are the most likely to be considered. Skills in the conservation and management of cetaceans are equally appreciated.

Please contact [tethys@tethys.org](mailto:tethys@tethys.org) for further information.

## **Research assistantships**

Research projects have their own director and staff. A few places are available each year for intern students or volunteers who want to help as field assistants. Such an experience will prove valuable for anyone intending to pursue a career in marine mammal science (or marine conservation biology in general).

Applicants should:

- have a fair knowledge of English
- be enthusiastic, hard-working, team oriented, and have a positive attitude
- be adaptable, flexible and patient as fieldwork is often weather dependent
- have a genuine interest in pursuing studies in marine ecology and/or conservation (a background in biology or ecology does help)
- be prepared to wake up early in the morning and work long hours on a boat



- have basic computer skills and knowledge of the most widespread software packages.

Assistants able to commit for a minimum of four weeks will be preferred. Previous field experience and boat handling skills would be advantageous but is not a prerequisite.

Research assistants are not given a salary, but room & board may be covered depending on the project's budget.

Research assistants are normally asked to contribute to all aspects of the research, including equipment upkeep, house- or boat-keeping, cooking, dealing with paying participants etc.

If you want to apply you can send your CV and a cover letter describing your interests, skills, motivation and kind of commitment.

## **Jobs**

The Tethys Research Institute is a non-profit organisation operating on a shoestring budget. Therefore, few people receive a salary and often only for short-term projects or for a few months.

Opportunities for paid work are rare and Tethys projects largely rely on the volunteer work of dedicated students and other collaborators. The few paid opportunities are typically offered to highly committed collaborators who have been consistently working with Tethys and have shown appropriate interest, dedication and skills.

At present there are no job openings at Tethys. However, if you are interested in working with us you can send a letter of intents and a CV and we will keep it on file in case any opportunity should arise.

## **Useful links**

Cetacean Alliance - How does one become a cetacean researcher?

[http://www.cetaceanalliance.org/sci\\_become.htm](http://www.cetaceanalliance.org/sci_become.htm)

Careers in Marine Mammal Science

[http://www.marinemammalscience.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=84](http://www.marinemammalscience.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=84)

\* Only Tethys personnel with a Science Index  $\geq 7$  and formally appointed by the Board of Directors is entitled to act as a thesis advisor or co-advisor on behalf of Tethys, and to make available datasets belonging to Tethys.