



Lacey Williams Biography

Lacey Williams was born and raised in Washington, DC. After she graduated from the National Cathedral School in 2012, she attended Colgate University, double majoring in biology and French. She received the Dean's Award for Academic Excellence every semester and was inducted into both Phi Eta Sigma and Beta Beta Beta academic honor societies. While at Colgate, Williams worked first as a teaching assistant for a first-year seminar titled *The Sixth Extinction*. Her senior year she was selected to be a Senior Admission Fellow in the Office of Admission her senior year where she conducted student interviews, managed the volunteer tour guide program, and helped to run information sessions.

After graduating *magna cum laude*, Williams spent the summer of 2016 pioneering an internship program with CollabraLink Technologies where she shadowed contracted employees in NOAA's Ocean and Atmospheric Research branch office. She helped edit online materials, draft exploration plans for the *Okeanos Explorer* expedition, and wrote an article that was published on their website. For the fall of 2016, Williams taught French and Algebra to high school sophomores on the Swiss Semester study abroad program in Zermatt, Switzerland.

At the start of 2017 she moved to Cape Town, South Africa where she worked on a great white shark cage diving boat with local great white shark expert and world renowned wildlife photographer, Chris Fallows, for two season. While in South Africa, Lacey assisted with several ongoing research projects on great white sharks, where she met her current advisor at the University of Miami, Dr. Neil Hammerschlag. From that research, she is now a co-author for a peer-reviewed paper that was published in the online journal, *Scientific Reports*, in February of this year. In 2019, Lacey assisted with two major research projects in South Africa, the first of which evaluated the efficacy of the De Hoop Marine Protected Area, South Africa's flagship marine reserve, in protecting smooth hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna zygaena*) and six other endemic shark species from commercial shark fishing pressure using acoustic telemetry and Baited Remote Underwater Video surveys (BRUVs). The second project became the focus of her master's thesis and investigated the natural predatory interactions between great white sharks and Cape fur seals in Plettenberg Bay, South Africa. During her master's degree, Williams was a member of the Shark Research and Conservation program and a co-founding member of the Mental Health Ambassadors student group. She also published a second peer-reviewed article in *Ecology's* "The Scientific Naturalist" online journal that highlighted a unique and understudied behavioral interaction that received international media attention, including *Forbes* magazine and *Science News*.

Upon completion of her master's defense in May of 2022, Williams returned to South Africa where she is now the Head Field Specialist for the Oceans Research Institute in Mossel Bay, South Africa. Currently, she runs the marine field research skills training internship program, manages and organizes the ORI databases from 2001 to present, and is collaborating on a project to create a nation-wide database for great white shark individual identification and population assessment.