

# Lauren Benoit

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## Education

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2008-2012

Lincoln School

301 Butler Avenue

Providence, RI 02906

2012 – 2017

The University of Rhode Island

45 Upper College Road

Kingston, RI 02881

University of Rhode Island College of the Environment and Life Sciences

B.S. Marine Biology

Graduation date: May 2016

Deans List Fall 2013 - Spring 2016

Fall 2014 Semester exchange at the University of Hawaii at Manoa GPA: 3.90

University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography Masters of Oceanography Fall 2015-Spring 2017 (GPA: 3.55)

Related Courses: Organic Chemistry, Organic Chemistry 2, Marine Biology, Oceanographic Science, Genetics, Invertebrate Zoology, Fundamentals of GIS, Coral Reef Conservation and Analysis, Marine Environmental Physiology, Marine Ecology, Animal Physiology, Seminar in Marine Mammals, Evolution and Diversity of Fish, Chemical Oceanography, Physical Oceanography, Biological Oceanography, Ecological Statistics, Fisheries Science, Geological Oceanography, Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Science and Management

## Production Credits – Underwater Second Camera

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Naked and Afraid Shark Week Special 2018 (Produced by Renegade 83 for Discovery Channel's SHARK WEEK) – Underwater Second Camera

Bloodlines: Son of Jaws 2018 (Produced by Pangolin Films for Discovery Channel's SHARK WEEK) – Deckhand & safety diver

Monster Tag for Discovery Channel's Shark Week 2018 (Produced by Propagate for Discovery Channel's SHARK WEEK) – Underwater Second Camera

ESPN Special - Hang Time with ESPN's [Sam Alipour](http://www.espn.com/video/clip?id=24143661) (<http://www.espn.com/video/clip?id=24143661>)

Uncaged: Ronda Rousey 2018 (Produced by Propagate for Discovery Channel's SHARK WEEK) – Underwater Second Camera

Cash Cab 2018 Shark Week Special – Camera Operator

Shark Weeks 50 Greatest Moments – Produced by Shark Week (Mike Sorenson) – Camera Operator



## Photo Features

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Dive Photo Guide Photographer of the week – <http://www.divephotoguide.com/underwater-photography-special-features/article/underwater-photographer-week-lauren-benoit>

Dive Photo Guide Making Waves in Shark Research and Photography - <http://www.divephotoguide.com/underwater-photography-special-features/article/making-waves-shark-research-photography/>

KTLA – Joe Romeiro Talks All Things Shark Week (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jXoeKYgVPk>)

## Work Experience

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### **Rhode Island Shark Diving**

**June 2018-Present**

I am a marine biologist, media manager and boat staff for Rhode Island Shark Diving. We bring guests out to swim with Blue and Mako sharks.

### **University of Rhode Island Shark Tagging**

**August 2017 – Present**

A couple times a week I assist Dr. Brad Wetherbee from the University of Rhode Island in tagging sharks off of Rhode Island. We use a baited hook that is attached to a float at the surface and a weight that sits on the bottom. We use both conventional and satellite tags for the sharks. I also assist in boat operation and gear maintenance.

### **Snappa Fishing & Diving Charters**

**July 2017 – Present**

This is a paid position where I am a mate on a charter boat run by captain Charlie Donilon, who has been featured in National Geographic magazine for his “no-kill” policy on sharks. This charter runs shark diving, tagging and sport fishing trips along with Block Island Wind Turbine Tours, ash burials and whale watching trips. Skills gained include fishing techniques used for a variety of fishing types, for example, trolling, bottom fishing and large pelagics. I have also learned gear maintenance, how to filet fish and boat operation and maintenance. I have been involved with many shark tagging trips (both satellite and conventional tags) as this charter tags them for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) & National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) January 2016-present**

I worked for credits under Nancy Kohler, chief of the Apex Predators Program, at the Narragansett Laboratory located on the Bay Campus at the University of Rhode Island. I analyzed data from the National Marine Fisheries Service Cooperative Shark Tagging Program from the years 1962-2016 for the Dusky Shark. I analyzed the mark/recapture rates along the west coast of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico for the different years using GIS. This analysis was used to create a status report of the species to help fisheries management. For my masters research I worked with Nancy Kohler using SEDAR (Southeast Data Assessment and Review) data to analyze the mark/recapture information for the sandbar shark in the western North Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, which has been submitted as a working document for the Data/Assessment Process for SEDAR 54 HMS Sandbar Shark. I am currently working with Nancy Kohler and Kevin Friedland on two projects that focus on habitat modeling of the blue shark and barndoor skate. Both of these projects use R for data analysis.

### **Phytoplankton Assistantship**

**December 2016-February 2017**

For two months I took over a PhD students, Stephanie Anderson advised by Tatiana Rynearson, phytoplankton sampling research as a paid position. This research consisted of weekly boat sampling, DNA filtration,



chlorophyll-a extraction/measurements, phytoplankton sample identification and surface/depth counts. Half of this work was conducted on a commercial fishing vessel where I also learned how to use various gear types, specifically used for the fish trawl. The other half was based on a small day boat.

### **Fiji Shark Conservation Project**

**June-August 2016**

I spent three months in Pacific Harbour getting my dive master and working directly with the Fiji Shark Conservation and Awareness Project. The goal of this project is to protect and conserve the eight species of sharks that inhabit Beqa Lagoon and to raise the awareness of the need for shark conservation around the world. I assisted scientists with the tagging of sharks and rays, shark and fish indicator species count on survey dives, setting and retrieving BRUVs, data collection, entry and analysis, workshops, mangrove reforestation work and working within the local community with education on sharks and their ecosystems, such as mangroves.

### **University of Rhode Island**

**July-September 2015**

I worked for a Ph.D. student, Abigail Blockus advised by Brad Seilbel, assisting with her shark research. Her work focuses on how marine organisms are adapted to their habitat, focusing on trimethylamine oxide or TMAO, which is found inside the cells of most living things and serves to protect proteins from stress. She is studying how sharks accumulate TMAO, if they produce it in their tissues or if it comes from their diet and whether it is used to combat temperature stress. Once a month I helped her with sampling where she took measurements (ex. length and weight), blood samples and tagged spiny dogfish and smooth hound sharks. I also helped her with the feeding, excretion trials and harvesting tissue. During the excretion trials I went to the lab every 36, 12 and 6 hours to do a different task over the course of the trial.

### **Oceans Research Internship – Mossel Bay, South Africa**

**June 2015**

This month long internship in South Africa enabled me to gain practical training in marine research techniques used to answer research questions on top predators in Mossel bay such as Cape Fur Seals, Bottlenose and Humpback Dolphins, Southern Right Whales, smaller Benthic Sharks and mainly the Great White Shark. Lectures were given to expand the theoretical understanding of topics encountered during fieldwork such as using GIS and R to understand the biology and ecology of sharks and their movements around Africa. We were able to work alongside marine biologists and help them with their specific research projects. Some of these projects include population assessment and long-term trend of the White Shark, Humpback and Bottlenose Dolphins, Southern Right Whales and Cape Fur Seals, habitat use of White Sharks and marine mammals, shark conditioning and behavioral studies, population structure, diet and movement of endemic Benthic Sharks, predator-prey behavioral strategies of White Sharks and Cape Fur Seals, shark stress physiology and behavioral studies, tonic immobility on shark species etc. We spent long hours out on the boat observing dolphin and seal movements into and out of the bay. We also assessed the shark population in the bay by taking photo-IDs of the dorsal fin, videos of the underside of the shark to determine gender and data collection on each of the specific sharks in order to identify them. I learned husbandry and management in an aquarium and performed experiments on benthic sharks such as tonic immobility and cognitive functions such as conditioning. I managed all of the data collected on the white sharks and put them into the ongoing shark database. I also watched videos of different reefs and recorded the species of reef fish seen in a specific area and time frame, known as BRUVS. There were also fishing trips where different species of Benthic Sharks were caught either for the aquarium or for research where they were tagged and released.

### **Cupcake Charlie's – Newport, RI**

**July 2015-September 2015**

I worked at Cupcake Charlie's as a sales associate and bakery assistant. Daily duties include assisting in baking and decorating the cupcakes, cleaning the kitchen and workplace and assisting the customers.

### **Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology Shark Research Lab**

**August 2014 – December 2014**

I worked at the shark lab during my Fall 2014 semester in Hawaii where I performed daily lab duties that involved animal husbandry, maintenance, record keeping/reporting and lab upkeep. I prepared the food and fed the sharks/tunas in the holding pens. I also cleaned the tanks and areas in the lab.



### **University of Rhode Island Coastal Fellows**

**February 2014 – August 2014**

I worked as a Coastal Fellow for Professor Brad Wetherbee, a biology professor at URI, helping him with his research on sharks. He gave me all the data from satellite tags used to track the sharks and I put them into excel and analyzed the data. I have learned how to use the statistical package "R," which deals with spatial analysis for the satellite telemetry data. This program helps analyze the movement patterns for many different types of sharks.

### **Mystic Aquarium**

**Summer 2013 – January 2014**

I was a docent for mystic, which means that I was able to educate the visitors about the animals in the exhibits. Before, I could do this I had to go through training that taught me how to be a better public speaker for different types of crowds.

## **Educational Experiences & Extracurricular Activities**

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### **Bimini Biological Field Station Research Experience**

**August 5-9, 2015**

I spent 5 days in Bimini, Bahamas at the Bimini Biological Field Station Shark Lab. The activities included snorkeling reefs and mangroves teeming with sharks, feeding juvenile lemon sharks in a mangrove nursery, handling juvenile lemon and nurse sharks, shadowing a Ph.D. student, participating in a work up session where the species' sex and lengths were determined as well as taking DNA. The work up session was also used during the longline set where we assisted in data collection and tagging of different shark species. We also did a full work up on stingrays where we caught them and took measurements, DNA/isotope samples were taken and a PIT tag was put in. Most of this work was based off of small boats where we would do the samples and tagging.

### **Winter Coral Reef Conservation Class in Bonaire**

**January 2015**

This class was focused on the conservation of coral reefs. I learned hands on scuba-based skills to practice conservation of the reefs. I performed research diving such as fish counts, rugosity and point-intercepts along the reefs transects. I was lectured on global marine conservation issues and issues surrounding the reefs in Bonaire. I also performed many lab experiments such as dissection of the invasive Lionfish. At the end of the trip, I presented my paper on the fish counts of protected and non-protected reefs on Bonaire.

### **Mystic Aquarium**

**2010-2011**

I participated in two full day classes that taught me how to draw and analyze blood from the animals.

### **Division 1 Tennis**

**2012-2013**

I played Division 1 tennis for the University of Rhode Island my freshmen year. I then started the URI club tennis team. I was the team captain, which meant that I did all the paperwork and went in front of the student body to get the club approved.

## **Certifications**

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- Dive Master (2016) – over 100 logged dives
- Nitrox (2016)
- Emergency First Responder/First Aid (2016)
- Specialty Diver (2016)

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- Projects Abroad Survey Diver
  - AWARE Shark Conservation Diver

## Skills

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- GIS (ArcGIS) and R have been used extensively in my research with NOAA/NMFS and throughout many different internships
- Tagging (satellite and conventional tags) and handling of sharks
- Fishing
- Boat operation and maintenance
- Experience filming and photographing Great Hammerheads, Tigers, Bulls, Lemons, Reefs, Nurse, Dusky, Ragged Tooth etc.
- Other skills include MS Word, Excel, Google Earth, Power-Point, Statistical Analysis, Dreamweaver

## Mentions

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- The Providence Journal: Fishing Report: Capt. Charlie Donilon keeps innovating (<http://www.providencejournal.com/sports/20170824/fishing-report-capt-charlie-donilon-keeps-innovating>)

## Publications

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- Undergoing revision
  - "Preliminary Mark/Recapture Data for the Sandbar Shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*) in the Western North Atlantic"