

# Honors Senior Spotlight



**Samantha Alaimo, '21**

**Hometown:** Bethpage, NY

**Major:** Marine Biology

**Minor:** Mathematics

**Thesis Title:** *Spatial distributions and essential fish habitats of Pseudopleuronectes americanus, Paralichthys dentatus, Scophthalmus aquosus, and Hippoglossina oblonga in defined seafloor areas of the Long Island Sound based on trawl surveys*

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Christian Conroy

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## **What is your thesis about?**

My thesis is looking at spatial patterns between four flatfish species in the Long Island Sound. I am combining trawl surveys with fish abundance data from the CT DEEP with data from the Long Island Sound Mapping and Research Collaborative to determine if there are factors, such as sediment type or depth, influence the distributions of these species. I hope to use the findings of these data and compare it to the habitat requirements defined by NOAA in 1999.

## **What motivated and/or inspired you to select this as your research topic?**

As an avid fisher, it is important that we know what habitats and what environmental factors are needed for these species to thrive. This research is important for the fishing industry and management as some of these species are commercially relevant. This project also has an analytical component to it so it's a perfect way for me to combine my marine biology degree with my mathematics minor.

## **Do you have any advice for future Honors students thinking about writing an Honors Thesis?**

I think the best advice is to talk with your advisor, your professors, and your peers. Bounce ideas off each other, or have them proofread your work. You also never know what may spark your interests. Lastly, don't panic! It will get done and just make sure you are sticking to a timeline. It helps a lot!

## **After graduating, what are your plans?**

I hope to attend graduate school in Fall 2021 to pursue a master's degree in Marine Biology/Oceanography. While working towards my master's, I hope to perform research that contributes data to the commercial fishing industry.

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