To me marine biology has always been more than a subject of study, it is my passion for

the largest, most complex, and unknown ecosystem on the planet. Biology was always one of my

favorite subjects in school, has expanded my interest even further. When I decided to study

marine biology, it was because of my fascination with fish, their behavior and striking colors

caught my attention as a young child and still catch my breath every time. I aspire to continue

learning more about the mysteries kept by the ocean and contribute to conservation and

protection of its many diverse and amazing inhabitants.

When I was 10 years old my family moved across the country from Virginia to Oregon.

Because we decided to drive my family stopped in many national parks where I was surrounded

by nature and discovered my passion for observing and discovering the world around me. From

the smallest insect to the largest mammals, animals have always been a great love in my life.

Even my hobbies revolve around nature and animals. Having grown up around fish and

aquariums I ended up picking up the hobby and have kept several aquariums with numerous

species throughout my life. However, the ones that always catch my attention are saltwater

aquariums. The wide variety of shapes, sizes, and brilliant colors of the inhabitants never ceases

to amaze me.

Growing up I went from wanting to be a vet, zookeeper, and park ranger to eventually

wanting to study to become an ichthyologist. Because of my love of nature and animals at an

early age it eventually led to my involvement in Boy Scouts as well as many summers spent at

science and nature camps. During my rise to the rank of Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts I learned

many things to better myself and my community, leading to my aid in a local food pantry for my

Eagle Scout project. I was also able to take part in many activities including assisting in the care

of American Chestnut trees, hiking nearly 100 miles of the Appalachian Trail, and spelunking in

West Virginia caves.

One of my favorite memories that drove me to deciding on studying marine biology was

when my father, grandpa and I went deep sea fishing off the Oregon coast. After leaving port

before the sun was up, we spent the morning on a charter boat fishing for striped bass. After

catching the legal limit, we headed back to the dock where we had the fish cleaned and prepared

for us to take home. However, we all wanted to just sit and watch the waves and listen to the

seagulls and sealions as they sunbathed on rocks near the fish cleaning stations. We ended up

sitting there for over an hour just enjoying the scene around us. Afterwards I jumped at the

chance to go to the docks to go fishing, crabbing, or even just to walk around. The ocean had

caught my undivided attention and never let go.

My experiences and fascinations with nature have shaped me into someone who is

enthusiastic about marine biology and eager to continue learning about the mysterious and vast

ecosystem that covers our planet. The diversity and beauty of the oceans captivate and fascinate

me so much that I want to pursue a career that would allow me to further observe, study, and

protect this essential ecosystem. I believe that studying marine biology can not only bolster my

own skills and knowledge, but also allow me to contribute to the scientific community as well as

society in general. I am confident that I have the curiosity, dedication, and motivation to not just

survive in this field, but to thrive and achieve my goals. Marine biology is more than just a

subject to study, it is my purpose and passion.