I spent my summer in Antigonish, a small town on the northern shore of Nova Scotia, one of the three maritime provinces of Canada.

Being almost entirely surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, along with numerous bays and estuaries, this region serves as an excellent location for the study of marine life and ecology.

Large populations of the Northern Hemisphere’s great whales, along with seals, dolphins, and smaller animals such as lobsters, scallops, whelks, and barnacles are all found in Nova Scotia. It also serves as an important area for migratory shorebirds, with more than a dozen species regularly stopping over at Nova Scotia whilst migrating from their Arctic breeding grounds to wintering areas in Central and South America.

During my 8 weeks in Antigonish, I worked in collaboration with the Canada Research Chair, Dr. Ricardo Scrosati, at the Marine Ecology Lab of the Saint Francis Xavier (StFX) University. My project investigated the effects of temperature and productivity on the survival and growth of the acorn barnacles, *Semibalanus balanoides*. 
Barnacles are small crustacean filter-feeders that inhabit rocky shores worldwide. Their sessile adult life-stage and intertidal habitat makes these organisms easy to monitor, and allowed me to examine their community structures.

My work involved collecting data along three different sites, two located along the open Atlantic Ocean coast on the north-east of the province, and one located along the Gulf of St. Lawrence situated on the north-west. I looked at how temperature and chlorophyll a content in the nearby water column varied across these spatially separated locations, and established how these differences would influence the survival and growth rate of *Semibalanus balanoides* populations. This meant long field days under the Canadian sun, often starting at around 6 am, followed by data analysis in the lab. Working hours were decided according to the tide table, since Nova Scotia is home to some of the highest tides in the world, making work on rocky shores extremely dangerous without considering tide timings.

Throughout my project, I was guided by both Dr. Scrosati and a PhD student, who provided me with helpful suggestions and recommendations. I was also offered the opportunity to write a manuscript about my work in Canada, which I hope to publish in future.
My project allowed me to incorporate a mixture of both field and lab work, which helped me gain both practical hands-on experience, along with learning numerous lab techniques and utilizing statistical and image analysing programmes. The only drawback was the limited time period.

Overall, this placement gave me a chance to travel to an area of outstanding natural beauty that I would not have thought of visiting otherwise. Although I did not have much free time to look at the entire province, I did get to visit the Cape Breton National Park, which I would highly recommend to anyone! Living and working in a new and unknown country is always an unforgettable and valuable experience, along with providing a great asset to your CV.

Dr. Scrosati examines a variety of different research areas and is always welcoming new ideas, so for anyone interested in working on the rocky shores of Nova Scotia, here’s a link to the Marine Ecology Lab site:
Good Luck!