Assessing the effectiveness of a marine aquarium in public education

Deborah Brown 06/07

I undertook my placement at Birmingham Sea Life centre because I have a passion about educating others about marine life.

Sea Life centres state that their mission is to educate the public. I set upon testing how well an aquarium could educate the public when it appears most people only visit the centre for recreational purposes.

This proved to be harder than first thought as the way in which we learn is extremely difficult to analyse. However, I did discover that although people did not read the signs as much as they could, and many found it difficult to recall one fact, most did feel that they had learnt something.

The encouraging message is that people do feel that they have learnt and may possibly use the visit to increase their awareness of how vulnerable marine life is becoming.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Sea Life centre as the staff were extremely friendly and it was nice to see the hard work that goes into caring for species that cannot be released into the wild and the effort made for species that are specially being breed to be released.

I chose this as my placement because I was keen to see how a UK aquarium could educate the public about current issues relating to marine life. I would definitely recommend this as an interesting placement and many other projects could be conducted within the Sea Life centres environment.