Placement blog

For my summer placement, I worked at the National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), New Zealand. NIWA is a crown research institute so is owned by New Zealand government ministers and works alongside the Ministry for Primary Industries to conduct research into marine ecology and New Zealand fisheries, among other activities. NIWA are a prestigious and well-known organisation among New Zealanders. Although they have office throughout New Zealand, I was based in the Auckland office.

I have an interest in fisheries and so chose this project mapping New Zealand’s scallop population, and analysing the influence of environmental conditions on their density. This was a desk-based study so I wasn’t doing any data collection of my own, but had access to extensive data collected by NIWA. The placement taught me a huge amount about handling data like this, experience which I’ve already found really useful in job applications and interviews. I had the chance to work alongside some fantastic people with a wide range of backgrounds in environmental science, including climatology, water quality and marine research, and so have learned a lot not only from my project directly, but from having the chance to work alongside such a diverse group. I had the opportunity to take part in invasive crab trapping, and helped to judge a regional science fair that NIWA sponsor.

The placement was a fantastic opportunity to experience a new country, which I had a great time exploring, and to get experience of what it would be like working for an organisation similar to NIWA. In job interviews, employers are impressed by the experience as it demonstrated your ability to independently secure yourself a placement and gain experience of working in a situation more like a workplace than university. I would greatly recommend NIWA to anyone with similar interests to my own!

Trapping invasive crabs (or in this case, a Conger eel!)  Exploring mangroves on Rangitoto volcanic island