**STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE**

**Sophie Wulfing, Indonesia, Biology**

**The status of octopus fisheries in the Spermonde Islands, Indonesia**

Mangroves provide a key **service** to the surrounding environment such as flood prevention, biodiversity **protection,** and carbon sequestration. However, coastal communities across the globe are experiencing mangrove degradation due to anthropogenic activity at an alarming rate. In order to address this issue, the Indonesian **government instituted blah blah to restore x amount of mangroves in various places of the country.** Since these efforts began in **some year**, the areas targeted have seen success in maintaining plant biodiversity **as well as being lucrative for locals come up with specific examples**. However, very little research has been done on assessing the biodiversity of marine species that have benefitted from this restoration project. In this study, I propose to visit several sites in Indonesia at different levels of restoration: **name sites, all are in South Sulawesi.** With the intention of understanding how mangrove restoration is affecting the local marine biodiversity, I propose to work with Dr. Rohani Ambo-Rappe from the Universitas Hasanuddin in Makassar. I will use this research to contribute to large scale biodiversity data sources such as Global Finprint as well as disseminate this information to local communities in order to help them make informed decisions about **whatever say something about local community action.**

Because mangrove restoration is a large scale conservation effort across the country, I will visit three locations in different stages of the project. **Name all three and where they’re at, deets of each, and what local stakeholders are there**. Data collection will occur through Baited Remote Underwater Videos (BRUVs). BRUVs are a non-invasive, easy to make camera contraption that I will employ in each of the sites and analyze these videos to assess what species are living in the area, create a **local foodweb of the species**, and assess the biodiversity of the area. Then, with the help of Dr. Ambo-Rappe, I will share my findings with the local community, both conservationists and fishers alike, to help inform how effective this mangrove restoration is and which fish stocks are healthy enough for fishing activities. Currently, my timeline for the project is in September – November 2023: Focus on Bahasa Indonesia language learning in Java (this part is contingent upon me receiving the CLEA award). I will also continue background research on identification of the marine species I expect to find, review background literature, and finalize methodology with Dr. Ambo-Rappe. December 2023 – May 2024: Data collection **name three regions, for two months each**. This will involve moving to these regions and beginning to work with local people in the area. June 2024: Data analysis, model food web creation and biodiversity assessment. July – August 2024: I will present results to Dr. Ambo Rappe, write up our findings, and begin working with the groups **name them** in discussing results and conservation suggestions **something about id guide or something.**

Dr. Rohani Ambo-Rappe is a seagrass ecologist that has worked extensively in the areas surrounding South Sulawesi with both fisheries researchers and the local community in the region. She can provide expertise in the area, connect me with local fish venders, and provide key advice for conducting science in tropical marine areas. I will also be applying for the Critical Language Enhancement Award (CLEA), which will be a key component of my communication skills with local stakeholders.

Dr. Ambo-Rappe has also helped me identify ways I can help support the local community. In order to engage with the students at Makassar, I plan on teaching courses in the statistical programming language R, a common analysis tool in ecology. I have run similar workshops during my master’s program and am familiar with the challenges new students face when learning to code. I would gain so much from a Fulbright Grant in Indonesia, and I hope to use this course to foster a mutual exchange of experience and knowledge. **More about community engagement.**

I have conducted fisheries research both in the field and through data analysis. In 2017, I interned for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration where I aided in a research project updating population models of Pacific fishes. Further, I participated in their bottom trawl survey, learning how to identify species in the Eastern Pacific and how fisheries are managed and regulated. Currently, I am getting my master’s degree at UNH’s Quantitative Marine Ecology lab where I study mathematical applications in biology. My thesis is in studying small-scale fisheries in Madagascar and I hope to continue this line of research during my Fulbright year. **Bring up LUMCON which is where I used to do coastal restoration research**

Further, in order to understand small-scale fisheries, having an understanding of their culture is key which is why I will also be applying for the CLEA in order to be able to communicate effectively with my peers and colleagues. Before leaving for the country, I also plan on mastering the basics of Bahasa Indonesia through independent study using resources such as Duolingo. On top of that, I am already pursuing a formal Bahasa Indonesia course through the language course website Babel. Further, I have contacted members of a local group in my area called Indonesia Community Connect that focuses on connecting Indonesian culture with the region and promotes Indonesian heritage in New Hampshire. I hope to find a native speaker willing to meet to have a language exchange in order to improve my language skills outside of coursework.

After my master’s, I hope to work for an NGO or government agency to better understand and quantify the status of our world’s small-scale fisheries. This project will aid me in that goal as it will help me gain a better understanding of how diverse subsistence fishing can be and how to incorporate ecological needs with the culture of the people fishing it. Despite the growing threats ocean environments face, Indonesia is still home to precious marine resources that require better understanding in order to protect them.