

Sara Vanderkaden – Gold Award Recipient 2018-2019



Sara Vanderkaden joined the Master of Marine Management program with research experience that combined marine biology and development studies. The program has helped her realize the overarching connections between her fields of study, and ignited her passion in interdisciplinary approaches to marine management.

Sara graduated from the University of Guelph with an Honours Bachelor of Science in Marine and Freshwater Biology and International Development. During her degree, Sara was awarded the NSERC

Undergraduate Student Research Award, where she worked as a research assistant, and later undertook an Undergraduate Research Project, studying reproductive fitness in zebrafish. Additionally, Sara participated in a Marine Biology and Oceanography field course in Saint Andrews, NB, where she examined a nutrient-induced gradient along a wastewater discharge pipe and its effects on the local snail population.

During her graduate degree, Sara developed an interest in market-based approaches to resource management that acknowledge the coupled nature of social and ecological systems. Sara's graduate research focused on the suitability of certification and traceability in the Nunavut seal market, with particular emphasis on how such market tools could support Inuit rights. Over the summer of 2019, Sara interned with Nexus Coastal Resource Management Ltd, where she worked with the Fisheries and Sealing Division of the Government of Nunavut. During her tenure in Iqaluit, she documented the existing value chain for Nunavut sealskins and assessed the traceability system in place for tracking sealskins. In addition, she conducted an open house in Pangnirtung to engage with community members on current strengths and opportunities in current seal-related government programs, as well as focus group discussions in Iqaluit and Qikiqtarjuaq to better understand shared perspectives on the role of market tools in supporting the Inuit seal hunt.

A copy of Sara's graduate project, supervised by Dr. Megan Bailey, MAP Associate Professor, and Chris Milley, MAP Adjunct Professor, "Certification and traceability in the Nunavut seal market: Implications for Inuit rights" is available on [DalSpace](#).

Sara was a recipient of the Douglas M Johnston MASC Scholarship in Marine Affairs offered by the Marine Affairs Program Admissions Committee. She was also one of the co-chairs (along with classmates Breanna Bishop and Priyanka Varkey) of the Sobey Fund for Oceans – Sustainable Oceans student-led conference, [One Ocean, Infinite Connections](#), held on September 27th and 28th, 2019.

As an associate at NEXUS Coastal Resource Management. Sara prefers to work in the gray areas between collaborating sectors and stakeholders, as she continues to problem-solve for sustainable economic development.