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UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Department of Geography-Geology



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Melanie G.
Parkside Junior High School
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Dear Melanie:

Thanks for your inquiry on how to combine your interests in marine biology and environmental studies. These fields are very much interrelated. As a marine biologist you will explore marine organisms, their behaviors, and how they interact with their environment. You will study cause and effect, for example, the environmental factors that may have caused the dramatic decline of a particular species of fish, while another species of fish, in the same area, experienced a large population increase.

There are many potential employers for someone with your interests, although pursuing a career in marine biology will necessitate a college degree and likely additional graduate studies. As the field of marine biology is very broad, you should look for a college or university that offers programs that are tailored to your specific interests, such as marine mammals, fish, plants, bacteria, etc. Many programs include hands-on research opportunities, which, in some cases, include ocean expeditions. Along with your studies in biology, I would also suggest courses in computer science and mathematics.

At this stage, it might be fun to set up and maintain a freshwater or saltwater aquarium, but be sure to get your parent's approval. You may also enjoy participating in a workshop at the John G. Shedd Aquarium, in nearby Chicago. They offer special marine biology programs just for teens! Finally, there is a lot of information, including photographs and maps, related to marine biology on the Internet. One of my favorite websites on this subject is the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration website (<http://www.noaa.gov/>).

Overall, you should have a passion for marine and environmental research and sharing your knowledge with others. Good luck with your studies!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy M. Bloom".

Amy M. Bloom
Assistant Professor of Environmental Geography