



PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CHILE

Facultad de Ciencias Biológicas, Departamento de Ecología

Estación Costera de Investigaciones Marinas

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To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Melisa Vural. I came to know Melisa in June this year (2014), as she undertook an intensive 3-months research apprenticeship at our coastal marine science center (ECIM, Estacion Costera de Investigaciones Marinas of the P. Universidad Católica de Chile) at Las Cruces.

During her intern work in Chile and with my guidance, Melisa successfully designed, set-up and monitored a field experiment to evaluate the effects of landscape-scale variation in habitat morphology on the behavior of a key predatory intertidal seastar (*Heliaster helianthus*). The spatial scale was particularly challenging, but Melisa implemented methods to quantify and compare per capita movement rates, refuge use, prey choice, and attachment strength, as well as variation in local abundance (density, biomass) and population size structure. Melisa consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic, tackling all (including routine, repetitive duties) with dedication. I was impressed with how she managed her time. She is conscientious, which lead to insightful observations and her efforts produced high quality data. Melisa's interest in her project clearly did not end the day she completed her short internship stay, as she has continued to email me (numerous times) with questions and observations - all focused on how to understand how it might fit into a bigger/broader question.

In addition to the above independent project, Melisa also happily assisted in diverse, multidisciplinary tasks associated with regular monitoring programs at ECIM. She worked well with others, was reliable and always quick to volunteer.

In short, I believe Melisa Vural will be an excellent and hard-working student, and an internship at MBARI will surely help broaden her perspective and hone academic qualities. I highly recommend Melisa and hope that you will carefully consider her admission application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Evie A. Wieters".

Evie A. Wieters

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