

# 2023 California Sea Grant State Policy Fellows

## Information Sheet



**Delta  
Stewardship  
Council**

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

- California Sea Grant State Policy Fellows are paid educational fellowships hosted by State agencies for one year.
- Since 2013, the Delta Stewardship Council has partnered with California Sea Grant to host over 39 State Policy Fellows.
- Fellowships at the Council provide springboards for fellows to grow their professional network, develop skills, and advance their career.

## Overview

**The Delta Stewardship Council is excited to welcome five 2023 California Sea Grant State Policy Fellows.** This fellowship provides graduates from master's and Ph.D. programs at California universities with unparalleled hands-on training at the interface of science, communication, policy, and management in California for one year.

The 2023 State Fellows bring diverse experience in the realms of marine biodiversity and conservation, climate change adaptation, resource management, community outreach and education, molecular and biochemical research, environmental policy, toxicology, sea-level rise adaptation, and more.

## Fellowship Placements

Kaira Wallace (She/Her)



Kaira is the 2023 fellow in the Delta Science Program's Adaptive Management Unit. Kaira has interned at Global Crisis Response, an Indian-based sustainability think tank, and Footprint App Inc., a carbon footprint tracking company. She will be working to support the Delta Independent Science Board and an assessment of Traditional Knowledge in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Kaira is excited to expand her professional skillset, including getting out of her comfort zone, learning to facilitate meetings and engage with stakeholders, and bettering her communication skills.

### Education:

- **B.A. in Earth Science**, University of California, Santa Barbara (emphasis: Climate and Environment)
- **M.A. in Climate Science and Policy**, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego
- **Capstone:** Obstacles and solutions to California ocean-based kelp farming

Sam Pyros (She/Her)



Sam is the 2023 fellow placed with the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) lead scientist in the Delta Science Program. Sam will participate in structured decision-making processes underway for Delta smelt and Chinook salmon, as well as research and evaluate the status of the IEP sturgeon monitoring program. Sam is excited about the opportunity to gain an understanding of the inner workings of monitoring strategies, planning ecological projects, and species protection.

### Education:

- **B.S. in Biology**, California State University, Stanislaus (Emphasis: Ecology and Evolutionary Sciences; Minor in Economics)
- **M.S. in Environmental Policy and Management**, University of California, Davis (Emphasis: Concentration on City and Regional Development)

- **Capstone:** Analysis and database creation of California's State agencies' monitoring efforts of social-ecological indicators

### Charnelle Wickliff (She/Her)



Charnelle is the 2023 fellow in the Planning and Performance Division. Previously, Charnelle worked as a graduate assistant at California State University, Monterey Bay, performing statistical analysis on surface maps in ArcGIS and assisting in the collection of marine ecological field data. She will be working on components of the Council's climate change initiative, Delta Adapts, and supporting rulemaking for ecosystem regulatory amendments to the Delta Plan, and assisting in outreach to community-based organizations and underserved communities. Charnelle is looking forward to learning more about how we protect our natural resources, furthering her understanding of the relationship between the best available science and actionable policy decision-making, and further cultivating her analytical skillsets during her fellowship.

### Education:

- **B.S. in Biology**, California State University, Monterey Bay (Emphasis: Ecology)
- **M.S. in Marine Science**, California State University, Monterey Bay
- **Thesis:** The use of drones as a proxy in surveying perimeter, area, and live cover of calcifying coralline algae

### Pooja Balaji (They/Them)



**Pooja** is the 2023 fellow with the Science, Communication, Synthesis, and Decision Support Unit in the Delta Science Program. Previously, Pooja was a student administrator at Unlearning Racism in GeoScience (URGE), as well as a board director and education coordinator at the marine conservation organization Azraq Middle East. They will support the rollout of the 2022 State of Bay-Delta Science and the launch of the Delta Science Tracker. In addition,

Pooja will support the Delta lead scientist in developing monthly lead scientist reports and “ask me anything” events. They are excited to familiarize themselves with the policy and communications side of scientific research and gain experience in an independent State agency.

**Education:**

- **B.S. in Biology**, University of Leeds (Emphasis: Ecology and Environmental Biology)
- **M.S. in Marine Biology**, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego
- *Thesis:* “Temporal and Spatial Variability of Pantropical Spotted Dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*) Group Size in the Eastern Tropical Pacific”

Eduardo Martinez (He/Him)



Eduardo is the 2023 fellow in the Collaborative Science and Peer Review Unit in the Delta Science Program. He has worked at the Environmental Sustainability and Pollution Control Research Laboratory at California State University, Los Angeles, and the Origins and Habitability Laboratory at NASA/JPL. He is excited to bring his scientific knowledge to the development of State policy and guidelines. Eduardo will support the implementation of the science action agenda and the facilitation of peer reviews of science pertinent to the State Water Project.

**Education:**

- **B.S. in Civil Engineering**, California State University, Los Angeles
- **M.S. in Civil Engineering**, California State University, Los Angeles

[Learn More](#)

To learn more, visit the [Council's research funding & fellowship web page](https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-science-program/research-funding-and-fellowships) (deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-science-program/research-funding-and-fellowships).