Fully-funded MS or PhD opportunity starting May or Sept 2019
IMPLICATIONS OF CORAL RESTORATION FOR FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY

WITH WHO & WHERE?
Austin Humphries, Assistant Professor, at the University of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI, USA) in the Biological and Environmental Sciences Graduate Program

BACKGROUND
Despite providing social, economic, and nutritional resources for millions of people, the majority of Indonesian coral reefs are greatly degraded. Consequently, coral restoration is gaining popularity as a potential management tool to combat reef degradation. It is essential to know how coral reef restoration influences associated fisheries and food security because changes in fish communities may not impact fisheries. This project will address the issue of how coral reef fisheries respond to reef restoration, and what this means for local food security.

WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?
You will leverage an ongoing coral restoration project as a case study and build on a baseline assessment of the fishery dynamics. The restoration activities and focal area for your work will be on Pulau Bontosua, in the Spermonde Islands of Southwest Sulawesi, Indonesia. One goal of your research will be to work with local collaborators to monitor the Bontosua fishermen and their catch in response to the coral restoration activities and associated fisheries management actions. Another will be to track the flow of fish from point of capture to consumption. Examples of tangible research outputs from your work may include: a length-based assessment of a subset of target fish species caught by Bontosua fishermen; a characterization of the nutritional benefits derived from the fish being caught and consumed. You will utilize these research findings to produce fishery recommendations for coral restoration in Indonesia, as well as the potential development of fisheries management policy on Bontosua and other islands in the Spermonde region.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR YOU?
Become an expert in fisheries ecology. This project will enhance your quantitative skills and provide you with experience in fisheries data collection methods and analysis. You will learn how to manage a field team of data collectors, input and process data, and construct statistical models to assess fisheries and their influence on food security.

Develop links with external organizations. You will regularly interact with an interdisciplinary team of scientists that have expertise in the natural and social sciences, including Drs. Amelia Moore and Carlos Garcia-Quijano from URI’s Department of Marine Affairs, as well as colleagues from Hasanuddin University in Makassar, Indonesia, and representatives from Indonesia’s Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. You will interact with non-profit organizations as well as individuals in the Corporate Social Responsibility space. You will be well-positioned to enter the job market and have a diverse and unique skillset attractive to industry, management entities, non-governmental organizations, or academia.
Join an exciting research environment. The Humphries Lab is a large and energetic young research group and you will benefit from the multidisciplinary College of Environment and Life Sciences at the University of Rhode Island. Your MS or PhD degree will be carried out within the Biological and Environmental Sciences program (i.e., Ecology and Ecosystem Science specialization).

WHO SHOULD APPLY
I am seeking applications from recent BS or MS graduates who have a strong quantitative background in the Environmental, Social Sciences, or Computer Programming fields, including but not limited to Fisheries. Of particular importance for applicants is ability to complete research tasks independently and be fluent in coding and statistical software such as R and/or MATLAB. Ability to link theory to practical work and modeling will be important, and therefore, relevant research and quantitative experience will be highly valued. Experience working and doing fieldwork in developing countries and SE Asia is desirable, as well as supervising research in the field.

DETAILS
Funding: For MS students, support will be provided for at least two academic years (four semesters) and two summers through a combination of Research and Teaching Assistantships. For PhD students, support will be provided for at least four academic years (8 semesters) and four summers through a combination of Research and Teaching Assistantships. You will also be encouraged to apply for external funding. Tuition is covered. The Assistantship stipend is approximately $26,000 per year ($19k for the academic year and $7k for summer), including health benefits.

Application Deadline: For full consideration, applications to humphries@uri.edu are due on December 29, 2018. The successful applicant will be encouraged to officially apply to URI before the Graduate School deadline of January 15, 2019.

Start Date: May or September 2019

For further information: Please send an email to Austin Humphries (humphries@uri.edu) if you have questions or would like to have a conversation about the position. See other research and people within the Humphries Lab at http://ahumphrieslab.com. Also, for more information on URI’s Biological and Environmental Sciences Graduate Program, see https://web.uri.edu/cels-gradprograms/bes/.

APPLICATION PROCESS
Please send a cover letter and CV (with contact information for 2 references) as a single PDF document to Austin Humphries (humphries@uri.edu) with “Coral fisheries graduate application” in the Subject. Please note only applications submitted as per these instructions will be considered.

SUGGESTED READING