

# Sydney Waloven

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## *Exploring Alaska: Building Partnerships, Understanding Co-Management, and Navigating Subsistence Challenges*

### Objective:

- ***Seeking guidance on information needs and potential challenges of communities with respect to co-management and subsistence.***

### Research Interests:

- **To better understand how people and marine wildlife (e.g., seals) interact in Arctic environments where subsistence is a priority.**
  - How could certain activities, such as commercial shipping, impact these interactions?
  - I would like to learn about and develop methods that help mitigate negative impacts.
- **Identify when and where marine wildlife and ships are most likely to interact.**
  - Predict what might happen if ships or animals change their movements (e.g., new shipping routes, migration routes).
  - Collaborate with communities to develop materials that advocate for subsistence, share important research findings, and provide information about the region's ecology, wildlife, and cultural practices.
- **Potential opportunities and benefits of working together:**
  - Co-production of new knowledge through collaborative partnership between scientists and community members.
  - Enhanced knowledge of the spread and magnitude of disturbances to seal populations and distributions.
  - Generation of valuable insights for future studies, including how human activities (e.g., shipping) and climate change affect the behavior and movement of ice seals.

## About me:

I grew up in a small town in rural New York. My passion for science evolved during grade school, from veterinary science to marine biology. My overall interest in the environment and wildlife continued into my undergraduate studies, where I pursued a Bachelor's in Biology with minors in Geology and Sustainability Studies from the State University of New York at Oswego. This diverse coursework provided me with a solid foundation for analyzing research encompassing different disciplines.



During my Bachelor's, I gained hands-on research experience and the ability to apply my ecological knowledge and interests. After graduating in 2020, I worked part-time as a clinical assistant and continued my research before transitioning to a new position as a quality control microbiologist, moving three hours away from home to Albany, New York. Ultimately, I decided to return to school to pursue my interests in biodiversity and conservation research. With the support of my parents, I got through the challenges of applying to graduate school as the first of my family to attend.



In Fall 2021, I joined a doctoral program at Michigan State University, under Dr. Jianguo Liu in the Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability (CSIS), requiring a relocation across states to East Lansing, Michigan. As a graduate student, I am interested in studying interactions among people, animals, and their environments. The past few years, I've delved into studying the dynamics within Arctic ecosystems, specifically in the Bering Strait Region.

Throughout my work, I've consistently engaged in additional activities and hobbies. In grade school, I participated in several sports, student government clubs, and band. During my undergraduate, I continued playing volleyball, dance, and playing the flute in the community orchestra/band. I've maintained this pattern during graduate school by balancing work with enjoying time with friends and pursuing hobbies like weightlifting, yoga, and volleyball.



My goal is to utilize my research skills for conservation, education, and inclusive policy, supporting environmental protection, subsistence practices, and amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups in policy decisions.