

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT HILO

TROPICAL CONSERVATION BIOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE



COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY



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MAY 14, 2021 • 3:00 PM

PROGRAM

Welcoming	
Opening oli	Kawehi Lopez
Director/ Associate Director/ Internship Coordinator	Tracy Wiegner Rebecca Ostertag Lisa Canale
The Graduates	Introduced by Director Words from Advisor/Mentor Student Mahalos
Closing	

UA AO HAWAI'I

Composed by:

Na Larry Kimura ka olelo

Na Kalena Silva ka leo oli

Kau e ka wena o ke ao i ka lani
He wekeweke i ka pō pilipuka
He 'elele o ka poniponi hikina
Kau ke kāhe'a wana'ao i ka 'āla'apapa
La'i ana i luna o ke kūkulu o ka lani lā
'O ka'u ia e huli alo nei i ka ulu ē
'Ae, ua ao ē.
Hō mai lā kō mālamalama
I ka honua nei i ka mauili ola
Ua ao Hawai'i ke 'ōlino nei
Mai ka pi'ina a ka welona a ka lā
Kāhiko 'ia i ka 'ike manomano
Ka 'ike kōli'u mai o kikilo mai
'O ka'u nō ia 'o ka pūlama
A pa'a ma ka ipu o ka 'ike ē
'Ae, ua ao ē.
He mele no Hawai'i ua ao.

The announcement of dawn appears as a glowing streak upon
the heavens, It is a narrow opening in the darkness heralding
the day, It is a messenger of the purple glimmer from the east
Streaks of red stain long cloud transformations
Reposing serenely upon the pillars holding up the heavens
I turn to gaze upon this, focusing on growth and the rising of a
new day, Yes day has arrived.
Bestow upon us your radiant light
Here upon the earth, filled with the spirit of life
Hawai'i is in the brightness of day, it shines, brilliant
From its boundaries from the east to the west
It wears as its finery a myriad of knowledge
Of deep insight from the depths of antiquity
My sole duty is to embrace and to cherish
So it may be firm in the repositories of enlightenment
Yes, day has arrived.
This is a poem for Hawai'i who has seen the light of day.



Jordyn Anderson

Assessing re-attachment potential and the large-scale aquaculture feasibility of native Hawaiian macroalgae



Jordyn Anderson is originally from Seattle, Washington, but moved to Hawai'i to get her undergraduate degree in Marine Biology from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. After falling in love with these islands, she moved to Hawai'i Island to continue studying marine ecosystems here at UH Hilo in the TCBES Graduate Program. Her work has centered around native Hawaiian macroalgae, or limu, and how the impacts of invasive species can be mitigated. She hopes to continue to inspire others to get involved in marine conservation through education.

Geoffrey M. Grimmatt

The contribution of lead contamination sites to childhood lead poisoning in the Hawaiian Islands



Geoffrey M. Grimmatt was raised in Alexandria, Virginia but currently resides in Mililani, O'ahu. He graduated with a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and has now completed his Master of Science degree in the Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science Program at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. A big source of motivation for Geoffrey is his curiosity about how the health of the environment and human health are linked. This curiosity resulted in him working on a project at the Hawai'i State Department of Health that assessed how environmental factors such as lead contaminated sites contribute to childhood lead exposure in Hawai'i. His future aspirations include working as an environmental health specialist or as an environmental epidemiologist.

Laura Knight

Quantitative analysis of the mesophotic coral ecosystem benthos in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands



I graduated from U.H. Hilo with my Bachelor's of Science in Marine Science, a minor in Biology and MOP certificate. When I began TCBES I had a different project entirely, but had to change direction and I am glad that I did. I was lucky enough to study something I love and am passionate about. This process has taught me to never give up, even when it seemed impossible to finish! I am so thankful for the opportunity to study such a unique and fascinating environment and am grateful for all of the support I have received.

Kawehi Lopez

Shifting into the new normal: invasive species outreach in the age of COVID-19



Kawehi Lopez grew up in Hilo and currently lives in Waimea on Hawai'i island. Her passion for conservation and working with people led her to pursue a career as a science communicator and informal educator. Since graduating with her B.A. in Environmental Studies from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Kawehi has dedicated her time towards addressing invasive species issues that are plaguing our island home. Upon receiving her degree, Kawehi plans to work with the Big Island Invasive Species Committee as a community outreach specialist.



Sebastian Ma'a

Expanding the capacity for the preservation and restoration of native forest habitats on the island of Hawai'i

Sebastian Abraham Waiola Ma'a was born and raised in Kealahou in South Kona on Hawai'i Island where he grew up playing in the coffee land climbing trees, learning how to fish with his dad and two younger sisters, and spent many days surfing from dawn until the sun disappeared forcing him out of the water. Sebastian graduated with high honors from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo with a Bachelor of Arts in Geography and Environmental Studies in 2019 and has spent the past two years working with the County of Hawai'i Real Property Tax Division as a Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science professional intern. Upon completion of graduate school, he hopes to use the skills and knowledge that he has acquired during his academic journey in the TCBES program to give back to the community of Hawai'i Island and do what he can to preserve and protect the natural wonders that make Hawai'i so special.



Koa S. Matsuoka

Seed dispersal and germination by native vs. exotic frugivores on Hawai'i Island

Koa is from Papakōlea, O'ahu. Areas of interest include native plants, birds, biocultural stewardship and policy. Koa is currently working for DLNR assisting with facilitating the State endangered species laws.



Bret Mossman

Kani a ka 'Ākiapōlā'au: a look of the vocalizations and ecology of a rare Hawaiian honeycreeper

My family is originally from Kaneohe O'ahu but I grew up in Utah, where I graduated from Utah State University with a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Management and a minor in Fish Ecology. My primary interests are in the conservation and restoration of Hawaiian forests, native birds, and the cultural practices that they support.



Sarah Jeanne Norrbom

Surveying the Oregon coast: work in conservation and preservation of estuarine systems

Sarah was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. Growing up her parents taught her and her brother to appreciate all the wonders that nature had to offer. Her love for nature and being outdoors led her to pursuing a career in environmental science and conservation biology. She graduated with a B.S. in Environmental Science from Southern New Hampshire University in 2019 and was accepted into the University of Hawai'i at Hilo's TCBES graduate program for Fall 2019. The TCBES program provided her so many wonderful experiences of working in the field, taught her how to communicate science to a variety of audiences, and how to be an effective steward of the environment and communities she serves.

Sabena Siddiqui

Humpback Whale (Megaptera Novaeangliae) non-song calls in the Hawaiian breeding grounds: acoustic characterization and examination of non-song call production as a function of pod composition and behavior

Born in India and raised in Indiana, Sabena has always been fascinated with questions about animal communication. She pursued her passion for these questions through participation in internships involving manatee cognition, and cetacean communication and distribution in locations such as Egypt, The Bahamas, Florida and the North Atlantic. These adventures led her to the TCBES program where she completed a project on humpback whale non-song calls in their breeding ground in Hawaiian waters. Sabena is also involved with non-profit work as a board member of the American Cetacean Society (ACS) and founder of their student coalition where she represents the organization at the International Whaling Commission. Recently she also served as editor of the first publication highlighting women scientists of cetology as she is also passionate about diversity and inclusion in STEM.

Hilary Street Scott

Characterizing genetic diversity of exon 2 of the MHC DQB genes in Hawaiian humpback whales (Megaptera novaeangliae)

Hilary is a Minnesota native, but her passion for marine science and marine mammals in particular began here in Hawaii when she was just 3 years old. After learning to snorkel, she fell in love with the ocean and its inhabitants, and this has driven her educational and career path ever since. She graduated with honors from the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science with degrees in marine science and biology, where she took advantage of opportunities to study abroad, participate in research projects, intern as a scientific diver, and volunteer in marine science outreach programs with local elementary schools. Before beginning her master's degree, Hilary also shared her passion for science with high school students as a chemistry and biology teacher. Hilary's favorite pastimes all revolve around the water, including scuba diving, snorkeling, sailing, and traveling, and she is thrilled that she has passed on her love for the ocean to her now 2 1/2 year old daughter Sydney.

Bryan Tonga

Establishing nearshore water quality conditions in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, for coral reef preservation in the face of altered land use and climate change

Bryan Tonga was from the atoll of Kapingamarangi, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. He came to Hawaii in 2015 to attend University of Hawaii at Hilo. He earned his Bachelor's of Arts degree from the Marine Science Department 2017. Bryan enrolled in TCBES in 2018. During his time at UH Hilo, Bryan was a student assistant in the UH Hilo Analytical Lab and an active member of the International Students Association. For his thesis research, Bryan conducted the first comprehensive water quality study for Pohnpei. Bryan passed away August 8, 2020. His degree is being awarded posthumously.

Carmelita Infra Villalobos

Monitoring the Hawaiian monk seal population on Hawai'i island

Carmelita is originally from Addison, Illinois. While obtaining her undergraduate degree in Biology at Dominican University, she volunteered and took an island ecology class at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. It was her experience there that caused her to fall in love with the ocean and sparked her passion for conservation. Carmelita moved to Hawai'i island in 2019 to fully immerse herself in the ocean and pursue a Master of Science degree. During her time on the island, she worked with Ke Kai Ola to promote the conservation of Hawaiian monk seals. Her career goals include working in marine conservation and using community outreach and education to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards to take care of the planet.

FALL 2020 GRADUATES



Pictured: Keena Curbelo, Sabena Siddiqui, Hilary Street Scott



Pictured left to right: Jazmine Panelo, Wilson Malone, Kelsey Meagher, Bryan Tonga



Pictured: Jeremy Schrader

Congratulations Fall 2020 Graduates

Keena Curbelo

Professional Internship: Characterizing the *Acalolepta aesthetica* Invasion in Hawai'i
Advisor: Lisa Canale

Wilson Malone

Professional Internship: Sustainable Management of Alaska's Kenai River Chinook Salmon in its Economic, Cultural, and Scientific Contexts
Advisor: Lisa Canale

Kelsey Meagher

Professional Internship: Monitoring of the Critically Endangered Hawaii Island Hawksbill Turtle (Honuea)
Advisor: Lisa Canale

Jazmine Panelo

Thesis title: Spatial distributions and sources of nutrients at two coastal developments in South Kohala, Hawai'i
Advisor: Tracy Wiegner

Jeremy Schrader

Professional Internship: In aid of the Alalā: a multifaceted internship exploring the field of applied conservation biology and beyond
Advisor: Lisa Canale

Did you miss a defense?
No worries! All completed defenses
are on the TCBES YouTube Page!



Watch them
now!

SUMMER 2020 GRADUATES



Pictured from left to right: Martha Kawasaki, Jake Rodrique



Pictured: Dominique Zarders

Congratulations Summer 2020 Graduates

Martha Kawasaki

Thesis title: The urbanization of the Hawaiian stilt: Meeting the new neighbors

Advisor: Patrick Hart

Jake Rodrique

Thesis title: The effects of vermicomposting and pre-composting on fecal coliform bacteria occurrence in animal manures

Advisor: Norman Arancon

Dominique Zarders

Thesis title: Investigating mitochondrial DNA genes and bioassays of Lantana lace bug to access a possible host shift

Advisor: Jolene Sutton