

Ashleigh Epps

EDUCATION

08/2020 – 05/2022. Master of Science, Marine Biology, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

- Planned, executed, analyzed, and published research on an unknown species of coral thriving in the coastal waters of Texas, utilizing SCUBA in less-than-optimal conditions (i.e., low visibility).
- Earned \$8250 in scholarships and \$4500 in grants within my first year of graduate school.
- Presented and competed in five symposiums, including the International Coral Reef Society Symposium and the American Academy of Underwater Sciences Symposium.

08/2014 – 05/2019. Bachelor of Science, Marine Biology, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

- Earned five SCUBA diving certifications through the University of Hawai'i Diving Safety Program (UHDSF), including divemaster and scientific diver, which led to teaching the Scientific Diver Qualification Courses and assisting in graduate SCUBA diving work for the UHDSF.
- Earned over \$10,000 in scholarships and grants.

08/2014 – 05/2019. Marine Option Program (MOP) Certificate, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

- Earned \$1350 in scholarships towards attending three intensive field courses utilizing scientific and rescue SCUBA certifications focused on coral ecology and maritime archaeology.
- Presented my independent research at the MOP Symposium and was chosen to present research from the field school at the Maritime Archaeology & History of the Hawaiian Islands Symposium.

WORK EXPERIENCE

05/2023 – Present (40 hours/week) Aquaculture Specialist

Washington Sea Grant, South Bend, Washington

- Designing and executing programs that enhance shellfish aquaculture, such as the Rapid Response Network, which partners with Tribes, agencies, and farmers and was created to monitor extreme climate events (e.g., high temperatures) that could cause shellfish mortality.
- Convened and facilitated the 2024 Washington Sea Grant Shellfish Growers Conference for 200+ people over two days to bring the most relevant shellfish aquaculture research, management strategies, and policies together for the local Washington shellfish industry.

06/2022 – 05/2023 (25 hours/week) Coral Disease Associate

Florida Sea Grant, Gainesville, Florida

- Coordinated research, meetings, and communications materials amongst the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Coral Disease Working Group Sub-Committees across the nation.
- Wrote and edited multiple grants, plans, and communications materials, including the NOAA Strategy for Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease: An Implementation Plan for Response and Prevention, the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) Prospectus, and SCTLD Newsletters.

12/2022 – Present (40 hours/week) Legislative Session Committee Document

Washington State Legislature, Olympia, Washington

- Preparing and editing policy bills and legal documents to move legislation forward.
- Assisting with the organization of committee meetings for the Regulated Substances and Gaming committee and the Finance committee through state and local agencies and the public.

09/2022 – 12/2022 (15 hours/week) Research Technician

TAMUCC, Corpus Christi, Texas

- Led dive operations for the Bahr Marine Ecology Lab for collecting local corals for experiments.
- Managed two post-baccalaureate students who were working on a \$1,000,000 NSF-funded coral biology and water chemistry experiment based in Kāneʻohe, Hawai'i

07/2022 – 08/2022 (40+ hours/week) Field Problems in Marine Biology Course Instructor

& 06/2022 – 08/2022 (40+ hours/week)

University of Hawai‘i, Kāne‘ohe, Hawai‘i

- Taught and facilitated a month-long field school of 15 students on a remote island off of O‘ahu.

08/2020 – 05/2022 (20 hours/week) Teaching Assistant

TAMUCC, Corpus Christi, Texas

- Taught undergraduate students laboratory safety and biological and ecological techniques.

12/2019 – 03/2020 (40 hours/week) Legislative Session Committee Assistant

Washington State Legislature, Olympia, Washington

- Organized committee hearings as non-partisan staff and edited and managed confidential legal documents, including policy bill drafts, through the legislative process.

06/2019 – 09/2019 (40 hours/week) Underwater Explorers Instructor

Monterey Bay Aquarium, Monterey, California

- Taught children ages 8-13 how to surface SCUBA dive in drysuits and about the intertidal organisms and ecology of the coastal zone in Monterey, California.

09/2017 – 05/2019 (20 hours/week) Diving Safety Officer Student Assistant

Dive Safety Office, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa,

- Taught advanced and scientific-level SCUBA diving techniques to students and researchers.
- Created [video training materials](#) using underwater media in sometimes rough weather conditions.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

07/2022 – 08/2022 (40+ hours/week) Research Assistant

& 06/2021 – 08/2021 (40 hours/week) Coral Reef Ecology Lab, HIMB, Kāne‘ohe, Hawai‘i

- Assisted in the Coral Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program utilizing SCUBA diving.

08/2017 – 05/2019 (20 hours/week) Undergraduate Research Internship

Gates Coral Lab, Kāne‘ohe, Hawai‘i

- Conducted three independent research projects over two years, including one resulting in a co-author publication and another utilizing underwater media production called [Silent Savivors](#) that was geared towards tourists visiting Hawai‘i and how to conserve coral reef ecosystems.
- Earned \$2287 in grants to conduct this research, including travel funding to present this research at the national Western Society of Naturalists Conference.

05/2017 & 05/2018 (40+ hours/week) Quantitative Underwater Ecological Surveying Techniques

University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, Hawai‘i Island

- Earned a competitive spot in the two-week field course as a student and as a student mentor.
- Conducted research with a field team, analyzed data presented, and prepared a technical report.

11/2017 – 04/2018 (20 hours/week) Sanctuary Ocean Count Intern

NOAA Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

- Helped coordinate the 2018 Sanctuary Ocean Count across three main Hawaiian Islands by organizing volunteers and 20+ sites around each island.
- Taught volunteers about humpback whale migration and behaviors, and how to identify them for population and ecological analysis.

06/2017 – 08/2017 (40 hours/week) Research Biologist Internship

& 06/2015 – 08/2015 (40 hours/week) Seattle Shellfish, Shelton, Washington

- Experimented with geoduck and oyster trials in Puget Sound for the best breeding conditions and protection against predation while utilizing SCUBA.
- Created a training instructional video for new staff to learn the company diving protocol and how to properly handle juvenile shellfish when utilizing SCUBA. Video available upon request.

PUBLICATIONS

Good, AM., M Coberley, AM Epps, V. Blesa, and KD Bahr. 2025. Influences of local and global stressors on coral species *Montipora capitata* in Kāne‘ohe Bay, Hawai‘i. *Coral Reefs*

Epps, AM., MN Bruce, M Gates, and KD Bahr. 2024. Corals thriving in dynamic environments may hold key insights into future coral reefs. *Estuarine, Coastal, and Shelf Science*.

McLaughlin, C., **AM Epps**, M. Considine. 2023. Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease: Understanding and Preventing Disease Transmission Fact Sheet. *Florida Sea Grant and NOAA*.

LaForest, K., C. McLaughlin, **AM Epps**, M. Considine. 2022. Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease: A Present and Growing Threat to Coral Reefs Prospectus. *Florida Sea Grant*.

Huffmyer, AS., CJ Johnson, **AM Epps**, JD Lemus, and RD Gates. 2021. Feeding and thermal conditioning enhance coral temperature tolerance in juvenile *Pocillopora acuta*. *The Royal Society of Open Science*.

Epps, AM., BD Walther, and KD Bahr. (in review) Environmental variability effects on stable isotope analyses: a case study of ahermatypic corals residing in a dynamic estuarine system. *Estuarine, Coastal, and Shelf Science*.

Fifer, JE., K Candelario, Y Gan, A Huzar, HE Aichelman, **AM Epps**, J Osterberg, V Ahuja, G Bussiere, J Feng, N Karadimitriou, KD Bahr, I Baums, JS McAlister, RD Rotjan, SW Davies. (in preparation) Investigating connectivity and thermal tolerance across the extensive range of the temperate coral *Astrangia poculata*.

CERTIFICATIONS

05/09/2015	AAUS Scientific Diver (currently active)
05/09/2015	Rescue Diver, Advanced Diver, and Nitrox Diver
05/31/2018	Divemaster and NAUI Fit Instructor (certified to 130ft depth)
12/21/2020	Diving First Aid Instructor, AED Instructor, and O2 Instructor
06/07/2025	Reef Check Foundation Kelp Forest Monitoring Certification

LEADERSHIP AND OUTREACH

06/2025 – current	Paua Marine Research Group Volunteer Olympia, Washington
02/2025 – current	Reef Check Washington Volunteer Olympia, Washington
09/2019 – 01/2023	Corals to Morals LLC Founder of Corals to Morals LLC
05/2022 – 12/2022	Bahr Lab Social Media and Outreach Coordinator, TAMUCC
08/2020 – 08/2022	Dive Control Board Student Representative TAMUCC
01/2019 – 05/2019	Albert L. Tester’s Symposium Sustainability Committee, Honolulu, Hawai’i
09/2018 – 12/2019	Silent Saviors- Hawai’i’s Coral Reefs Hawai’i Institute of Marine Biology
09/2018 (10 hours)	Coral Reef Debris Volunteer Trees to Seas, Honolulu, Hawai’i
03/2017 (8 hours)	Marine Debris Volunteer NOAA, Honolulu, Hawai’i
12/2017 – 04/2018 & 12/2018 – 04/2019	Community Science Site Leader Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Texas Sea Grant Aid in Student Research Award- \$2500
To support graduate students enrolled in the state of Texas with research expenses.

Harstine Island Women’s Club 2017 - \$1,500, 2020 - \$1,850, 2021 - \$4000

To support an outstanding student residing on Harstine Island, Washington, with tuition costs.
 Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Science & Engineering Graduate Scholarship- \$1000
To support graduate students with tuition and academic expenses.
 Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Center for Coastal Studies Award- \$2000
An award for students researching corals to support their research expenses.
 Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Research and Innovation Scholarship- \$800
To support a remarkable TAMU-CC student with tuition and research expenses.
 Bob Hood Memorial Scholarship Award- \$500
A scholarship through the Texas Outdoors Writers Association for a noteworthy student.
 Bring it Home Scholarship - \$100
To someone who made a positive environmental impact during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Travel Scholar - \$1287
For students who take the initiative to find and attend a conference to present their research.
 Colonel Willys E. Lord, DVM & Sandina L. Lord, HIMB Scholar - \$1000
Students who conduct place-based research at the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology.
 Steve Stone Coral Reef Foundation - \$500
To support tuition costs for a student attending the Quantitative Underwater Ecological Surveying Techniques (QUEST) field school.
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Scholar - \$350
To support tuition and academic costs for a student attending the QUEST field school.

PRESENTATIONS

2025	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Conference
2025	Washington Sea Grant Shellfish Growers Conference
2024	Washington State University Coastal Shellfish Growers Conference
2024	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association Annual Conference
2024	Washington Sea Grant Aquaculture Workforce Development Program
2024	National Shellfisheries Association Annual Conference
2024	Hispanic Access Foundation "Aqu-alks" Talk Series
2023	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association
2023	Florida Coral Technical Conference
2023	Caribbean Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease Conference
2022	American Academy of Underwater Sciences Symposium
2022	TAMU-CC Three-Minute Thesis Competition
2022	Texas A&M University System Pathways Symposium
2021 & 2022	TAMU-CC Coral Biology Course
2021 & 2022	University of Hawai'i Biological Field Problems Course
2021 & 2022	Marine Science Graduate Student Organization Symposium
2021	International Coral Reef Society Conference
2021	TAMU-CC Environmental Health and Safety Meeting
2020	TAMU-CC Islander Green Team Meeting
2019	Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Symposium
2018 & 2019	Albert L. Tester Memorial Symposium
2019	Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology Scholarship Symposium
2019	Maritime Archaeology & History of the Hawaiian Islands Symposium
2018	Western Society of Naturalists Conference