

# Daniela Escontrela

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## Education

**University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa** Honolulu, Hawaii  
*PhD Candidate in Marine Biology* 2019 to present

**The Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS), The University of Miami** Coral Gables, FL  
*Bachelors of Science, Marine Science and Biology – minors in Chemistry and Ecosystem Science and Policy* 2015  
*Magna Cum Laude, GPA 3.85*

**UGalapagos Program at the Intercultural Oceanographic Institute** Isabela Island, Galapagos  
*Study abroad program through the University of Miami* Spring 2014

## Publication

Anderson, L. G.; Chapman, J. K.; **Escontrela, D.**; Gough, C. L. A. (2017) The role of conservation volunteers in the detection, monitoring and management of invasive alien lionfish. *Management of Biological Invasions*, Volume 8, Issue 4: 589–598 DOI:<https://doi.org/10.3391/mbi.2017.8.4.14>

## Acknowledgements

Irschick, D. J. & Hammerschlag, N. Morphological scaling of body form in four shark species differing in ecology and life history. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 2014. 114 (1-10)

## Oral Conference Presentations

Escontrela, D. (2022) “Computerized photo identification of individual cushion stars (*Culcita novaeguineae*)” University of Hawai‘i Testers Symposium Lightning Talk. In person. Runner up best rapid-fire talk

Escontrela, D. (2021) “Feeding Preferences of the Hawaiian cushion Star (*Culcita novaeguineae*)”. Hawai‘i Conservation Conference Lightning Talk. Virtual

Escontrela, D. (2021) “Feeding Preferences of the Hawaiian cushion Star (*Culcita novaeguineae*)”. POSea Lightning Talk. Virtual

Escontrela, D. (2021) “Feeding Preferences of the Hawaiian cushion Star (*Culcita novaeguineae*)”. University of Hawai‘i Testers Symposium Lightning Talk. Virtual

Escontrela, D. (2021) “Feeding Preferences of the Hawaiian cushion Star (*Culcita novaeguineae*)”. Western Society of Naturalists Lightning Talk. Virtual

## Research Experience

**Graduate Research Assistant** August 2019 – Present

*University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa*

PI: Dr. Mark Hixon

- Conducting *in situ* experiments testing the feeding preferences of the Hawaiian cushion star
- Utilizing SCUBA to do undersea assessments of the cushion star around O‘ahu to understand patterns of distribution
- Cooperating with NOAA’s Pacific Island Fisheries Center to develop a tool for extracting coral predation marks from 3D models of coral reefs
- Spearheading logistics for field operations, captain the boat, and supervise interns and other volunteer divers

### **Shark Research Center and Conservation Program, University of Miami**

**January 2012-May 2015**

*Trip leader and undergraduate researcher*

PI: Dr. Neil Hammerschlag

Conducted shark research in the Florida Keys and Miami.

- Instructed over 20 interns and graduate students in the research protocols out in the field.
- Facilitated intern training sessions, represented the lab at public outreach events and gave classroom talks to students aged between seven and eighteen.
- Utilized morphological data from over 200 sharks for the formulation of a senior thesis paper relating morphology to geographic location.

### **RSMAS Coral Research Lab**

**August 2013-December 2013**

*Research Assistant*

Dr. Andrew Baker

Conducted research with coral DNA.

- Performed DNA extractions and ran qPCR plates using the extracted DNA.

## **Professional Experience**

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### **Summit Foundation**

**January 2019 to August 2019**

*Mesoamerican Reef Program Associate*

Managed grants for the program and assisted in the formulation of a new program strategy.

- Used the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation to create conceptual models, develop strategies and prioritize lines of work for the Mesoamerican Reef Program.
- Evaluated grant applications and created written documents with appraisals for grants to be reviewed by the Grants Review Committee.
- Liaised between grantees and the foundation, aiding in the improvement of grant applications and ensuring deadlines were met in addition to creating documents to track historical information for the foundation.

### **United States Peace Corps, Philippines**

**July 2016 to August 2018**

*Coastal Resource Management Specialist*

Coastal Resource Management Volunteer working in partnership with the fisheries office at the local government unit.

- Developed and implemented a training of trainers in environmental education for 33 educators from thirteen high schools and followed up at schools conducting environmental campaigns for over 1,500 students.
- Spearheaded a Participatory Coastal Resource Assessment (PCRA) training and implementation activity for 27 coastal communities to empower marginalized people and to formulate a new Coastal Environmental Profile.
- Obtained and managed a Peace Corps Small Projects Assistance Grant of \$2000 for PCRA activities.

### **Blue Ventures Conservation Program, Belize**

**May 2015 to June 2016**

*Field Scientist*

Led science program in a remote marine reserve in Belize conducting surveys, training volunteers and participating in community activities.

- Conducted underwater monitoring surveys such as fish belts, point intersect transects and coral disease surveys using SCUBA.
- Supervised data collection for 12 research sites and data entry process for five years' worth of data in addition to doing annual report writing with the collected data for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- Trained over 120 incoming volunteers from over 10 countries in species identification and survey techniques.

### **Sea Experience Diving Schools, Florida, USA**

**June 2011-May 2015**

*Scuba Instructor*

Certified over 100 participants in all levels of PADI dive training from Open Water to Divemaster.

- Conducted all aspects of dive shop work including administrative tasks, serving as first mate and conducting maintenance work.

## **Awards**

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### **National Science Foundation**

INTERN Grant (Fall 2022-Spring 2023)

### **National Science Foundation**

Graduate Research Fellowship Program (Fall 2019 – Present)

### **University of Hawai‘i**

Graduate Student Organization Award (Fall 2020, Fall 2021)

Charles H. and Margaret B. Edmondson Research Award (Spring 2020)

### **Florida Bright Futures**

Florida Academic Scholar (Fall 2011 - Spring 2015)

### **University of Miami**

President’s Honor Roll (Fall 2011)

Provost’s Honor Roll (Fall 2011 - Fall 2013)

Dean’s List (Fall 2011 - Spring 2015)

General Honors Program (Fall 2011 - May 2015)

## **Service**

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### **Author for Magazine, Conexiones**

*Florida*, November 2018 – Present

- Write monthly column in Spanish relating to current environmental topics and news.

### **Graduate Women in Science Hawai‘i**

*Hawai‘i*, June 2020-Present

Social Media Coordinator (June 2020-June 2021), President (June 2021-present)

- Developed social media strategy and created material for social media platforms
- Coordinated the executive board to plan professional development, social, and fundraiser events

### **Skype-A-Scientist**

*Virtual*, August 2019 – Present

- Video conference with elementary, middle, and high schools across the country to answer questions about marine biology and pursuing a career as a marine biologist

### **Marine Biology Graduate Program Student Representative**

*University of Hawai‘i*, May 2020 – December 2021

### **Girl Scout Troop Guest Speaker**

*Florida*, July 2017

- Spoke to girl scout troop in Florida about marine biology, careers for marine biologist, and current research

### **STEM Explore Guest Speaker**

*Virtual*, October 2019 and June 2020

- Educated students and participants about various marine biology topics, including discussions about current research and careers in marine biology
- Participated in a panel discussion answering questions about marine biology careers

### **Sea Turtle Oversight Protection, Florida, US**

*Beach Patrol Volunteer*, May 2013-October 2013

Organization dedicated to sea turtle conservation.

- Undertook night patrols to rescue hatchlings of three species disoriented by light pollution.
- Gathered light pollution data for disorientation reports and educated beach goers.

### **Ocean Awareness Week**

*Florida, December 2012-April 2013, Secretary*

- Organized events for the community to educate them about local environmental topics
- Educated the campus and spoke at local school about ocean related topics

### **Memberships and Affiliations**

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#### **Graduate Women in Science, Hawai'i**

*University of Hawai'i*

June 2020 – present

- Social Media Coordinator (June 2020-June 2021)
- President (June 2021-present)

#### **Rho Rho Rho (Marine and Atmospheric Honor Society)**

*University of Miami*

August 2011-May 2015

#### **Marine Mammal Rescue Team**

*University of Miami*

August 2011-May 2015

### **Skills and Qualifications**

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- **Fluent in Spanish and English**
- **Proficient in Cebuano dialect**
- **Proficient in Caribbean and Pacific fish, benthic, megafauna and bird identification**
- **Proficient in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and RStudio**
- **Scientific Diver Certification (American Academy of Underwater Sciences)**
- **PADI Master Scuba Diver Instructor**
  - 14 years of diving experience, 1100+ dives
  - Certified to teach the following specialties: Deep, Digital Underwater Photography, Underwater Navigation, Enriched Air, Peak Performance Buoyancy, Coral Reef Conservation and Shark Conservation
- **DAN Diving First Aid for Professionals Certification**
- **Emergency First Response Instructor (CPR/AED/First Aid- Infant, Child, Adult)**