Marine Science Career Information

Background and Key Concepts
The field of marine science is exciting and diverse, especially in Hawai‘i. There are numerous job opportunities and career paths – for example, managing fisheries, working on ships, becoming a laboratory technician, and educating others about marine conservation. A career as a marine scientist offers many opportunities to travel and explore the world around you. In this field, you are constantly learning and experimenting, seeking to gain new knowledge and insights. One has to be a curious and independent thinker. A scientist does not accept a conclusion until s/he has enough evidence to reasonably exclude all other possibilities. A scientist also has to be clever and creative so that s/he can dream up experiments to answer her/his questions. Additionally, a scientist must be a 'go-getter'. If scientists conduct their own research, they cannot wait around passively for somebody to tell them what to do. They have to take initiative and show independence. Marine scientists work varying hours, depending on the job and what type of research they are currently doing. The hours are typically longer when one is just starting out. The salaries range greatly and the competition for positions can be high.

So, you’re thinking about a career in marine science? Then, it is a good idea to take all the math and science courses you can in high school and college. Expect to spend at least four years in college to get your Bachelor of Science degree. Possible majors include Global Environmental Science, Oceanography, Marine Biology, and Marine Science. Regardless of your major, you will need to develop a basic understanding of science (e.g., biology, chemistry and physics) and mathematics (at least up to calculus), as well as computer, technical and writing skills. It is also important to be comfortable in the water and to be knowledgeable about the marine environment. We recommend that you acquire SCUBA certification and a valid driver's license, and learn to handle a boat.

While you’re in high school and college, take advantage of the many opportunities to volunteer or work in the marine science field. For example, you could get a summer or weekend position in an aquarium, government agency, ocean engineering firm, coastal geology consulting company, marine laboratory, fish pond, wildlife rescue center, or marine education center. There are a lot of opportunities for college students to volunteer on research cruises, such as the four-day Hawai‘i Ocean Time-series (HOT) cruises. Gaining this experience now will help you build a strong resume, which will help you secure a job following graduation.

Hawai‘i Content & Performance Standards (HCPS III)
The following standards and benchmarks can be addressed using this lesson:

Career and Technical Education Standard 2: CAREER PLANNING: Explore and understand educational and career options in order to develop and implement personal, educational, and career goals.

Grade 3 Benchmarks for Career and Technical Education:
Benchmark CTE.3.2.1: Describe how different careers may require different skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Grade 4 Benchmarks for Career and Technical Education:
Benchmark CTE.4.2.1 Analyze how doing well in school affects future career opportunities.

Grade 6 Benchmarks for Career and Technical Education:
Benchmark CTE.6.2.1 Establish personal and learning goals related to career and life interests.
Additional References
Most marine science research stations and organizations have their own websites, which you can visit to seek additional information. These websites provide some general information about marine science careers:

http://www.naml.org/videos/
http://oceanlink.island.net/career/career2.html
http://hopkins.stanford.edu/careers.htm
http://life.bio.sunysb.edu/marinebio/mycareer.html
http://aquarium.ucsd.edu/Education/Learning_Resources/So_You_Would_Like_To_Be_A_Marine_Biologist/