

Seth Tuzon



Seven days ago, I set out on a journey that would shift something deep within me. I boarded with excitement, anticipation stirring in my chest, and a touch of uncertainty. I didn't know exactly what lay ahead—but I knew it would leave its mark.

When we disembarked and I met the group I'd be sharing this journey with, I found myself quietly wondering how I would fit in. These were people of remarkable skill and presence—leaders in their fields, stewards of culture, knowledge, and place. I questioned what I could possibly offer, and what space I might be able to hold in a team so seasoned.

But as we traveled together, listening to the stories of the past and the plans for what was to come, I began to understand that I wasn't expected to be anyone but myself. I was there to learn, contribute, and grow—and there was room for all of us in this voyage.



When we arrived at Mokumanamana, the first light of day met us like a blessing. The weather gifted us a rare window to step ashore, and as our feet touched that sacred land, we called upon our ancestors to guide us. That moment—standing on ancient ground, asking for protection and clarity—was powerful. We each set out to fulfill our kuleana: Air, ‘Āina, and Kai. Despite limited time, we accomplished a great deal. The land team, unfortunately, had to return early due to the shifting weather, reminding us that we are always in conversation with nature, not in command of it.

At Nihoa, the challenges continued. We were held back by wind and sea, unable to land at first. But we waited, watched, and hoped—and finally, on the second day, a brief window opened. We worked quickly and intuitively, anticipating each other’s movements without needing to speak. The way we functioned as a team in that moment said everything: we had found our rhythm, and our shared purpose guided our steps. One of the most cherished gifts of the trip was time to rest and connect with the ocean. Diving into that world beneath the surface opened something in me.



We were surrounded by life—from the smallest baitfish to the commanding presence of ulua and mano. Everything pulsed with energy. The reef felt alive, ancient, aware. I swam not just through water, but through story, connection, and awe. That moment will stay with me for the rest of my life.

As we sailed home, I found myself in deep reflection—on what I had witnessed, what I had learned, and how I had changed. The islands, the ocean, the work, the people—each had shaped me in ways I’m still uncovering. I return with a heart full of gratitude, a mind enriched by shared knowledge, and a spirit re-centered by the space we occupied together. To those who shared their wisdom and welcomed me into this journey: mahalo. Thank you for trusting me, for holding space for me, for allowing me to walk beside you. We left as travelers and returned as something more—an Ohana, woven together by purpose, challenge, joy, and a shared love for these sacred places.





This was more than a trip.
It was a transformation.
And I will carry it forward, always.