

Aloha Kaponō

When I got the kāhea just a week before, I was instantly honored and felt the deep weight of that Call. Reconnecting to more Hawai‘i is something I’ve been actively seeking, and stepping onto Mokumanamana for the first time and doing so with these incredible individuals made my heart so full.

This journey gave me more confidence in myself and my abilities from working alongside Nalu doing drone and GoPro photogrammetry, to jumping back into the ‘opihi surveys and learning new approaches. I felt so much purpose in gathering data that carries story and responsibility. The support from everyone was unreal. I’ve been battling imposter syndrome at work, and shedding some of that insecurity out there was healing. I know it’ll always linger in some ounce, but feeling safe and surrounded by trust helped clear my no‘ono‘o and reminded me what I’m capable of.

Moving through pō and coming back with a renewed sense of pilina with my kūpuna is something I’ll hold close forever, especially as I carry these momi back home to share with my ‘ohana in Hilo. Swimming with the manō beside ‘Anakala and seeing his pure joy reminded me so much of my own Dad who’s in the early stages of dementia and the time he once spent in the ocean. It was a gentle reminder that our kūpuna’s memories are true treasures, and that being present with them, and for them, matters so much.

Mahalo nui Kanoe for leading us with such intuition and deep aloha, your guidance keeps us grounded in purpose and pilina. I’m grateful for all the mo‘olelo, the laughter, the quiet moments, and the chance to learn and grow alongside this crew.