

DISCOVER YOUR WORLD



# FISHERIES EXTENSION AGENT

FISH ARE FUN TO CATCH, GREAT TO EAT,  
AND INTERESTING TO STUDY. I HELP  
FISHERMEN, SCIENTISTS, AND MANAGERS  
BETTER COMMUNICATE TO ENSURE  
THESE OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE  
FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

– KEITH, HONOLULU



MEET

## Keith Kamikawa

Fisheries Extension Agent for NOAA Fisheries  
Pacific Islands Regional Office

### What is the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office?

The Pacific Islands Regional Office is responsible for:

- Maintaining and managing healthy ocean ecosystems that promote & provide for sustainable fisheries.
- Conserving and recovering protected marine resources using sound natural and social sciences.
- Enhancing opportunities for commercial, recreational, and cultural activities in the Pacific Islands Region (Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Pacific Remote Islands area, which is comprised of Kingman Reef; Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands; and Wake, Johnston, and Palmyra Atolls.

### What exactly does Keith do as a Fisheries Extension Agent?

Keith acts as the interface (middle-man or liaison) between the fishing, scientific, and management communities. There is sometimes mistrust or misinformation between parties, leading to decreased productivity and increased obstacles in the management and scientific process. His program aims to address these issues between stakeholders.

## Education

Keith was always known as the “fish guy” in high school. However, he didn’t always know that he wanted to be a marine biologist and work in the fisheries field. “My studies at the University of Washington and University of Hawai’i carried me to this field as I worked on different projects,” Keith says. “I took opportunities as they came and didn’t force myself into anything.” Keith earned his B.S. in aquatic and fishery sciences from University of Washington at the School and his M.S. in marine biology from the University of Hawai’i; he is currently a marine biology Ph.D. student at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.

## Background & Hobbies

Keith grew up in Kāne’ohe on O’ahu and attended Hawai’i Baptist Academy. He spends his free time playing soccer, fishing, and hiking, and he enjoys camping. He initially thought he wanted to be an engineer who designs and invent things because his dad was an engineer. However, he had such a strong passion for the aquarium and fishing. Further along into high school and his undergraduate studies, he discovered that he could study fishes as a career path, where his passions would prove an invaluable asset. “Why not combine my hobby and life-long passions into an academic and professional career?” he says.

## Internships/Experience/Opportunities

Keith completed internships at HIMB, the Hawai’i Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit, and the NOAA Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center.

## Pivot Points

Keith’s most rewarding and fulfilling work was volunteering at the University of Hawai’i’s Hawai’i Institute of Marine Biology on Coconut Island. “We are often driven by looking for high paying work, but my internship at HIMB was by far one of my best experiences,” he says. “It set me up for paid internships/jobs and I still reap the benefits of that internship to this day.”

## Advice to Students

“Stay true to yourself and pursue a field or career you have a passion or affinity for,” Keith advises.

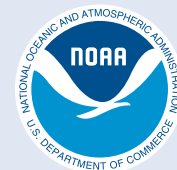
## Most Challenging Part of the Job

For his job, it’s important for Keith to know a little about everything, from issues regarding coral reef fisheries and protected species to current legislative bills and state/federal regulations. “It’s challenging to be current on all of these topics,” he says.



## Careers with NOAA Fisheries

- Biologist
- Biological science technician
- Ecologist
- Economist
- Fisheries observer
- Marine mammal stranding response manager
- Information technology specialist
- Management and program analyst
- Microbiologist
- Natural resource management specialist
- Oceanographer
- Communication specialist
- Social scientist



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