

DISCOVER WONDER

IPOLANI SALADO

Sanctuary Ocean Count volunteer leader



Aloha, my name is Ipolani Salado. I was born and raised on the island of O'ahu. I have always had a passion for the ocean. Growing up on an island, I've learned to appreciate the land we live on along with all its natural resources... Mauka to Makai, from the mountain to the ocean!

From a young age until my teen years, I danced hula for one of the oldest hālau on the island. Through hula, I have learned that "Hula is Life," and that everything from the mountain to the ocean is life and we are the hands that will care for the island that we live on. I wanted to be more involved with the island I live on and volunteering was one way to do just that.

Volunteering at the Army Museum at Fort DeRussy alongside leaders of the Ala Wai Watershed, I learned the important role our mountains play for our oceans and the value of preservation and conservation. At Hawai'i Nature Hui and at Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve, my role for both organizations was to educate visitors, both members of the community and tourists, about taking care of the reefs. And with Mālama Maunalua, I enjoyed taking care of the rain gardens at Wailupe Beach Park and Kuliouou Beach Park, where I managed water samples, soil samples and plant clipping for photo points. The experience of being able to get my hands into the land was very rewarding.

The year 2012 was the first year that I volunteered for the Sanctuary Ocean Count project with the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. I loved my experience participating in the count so much that I signed up to be a site leader for the 2013 Sanctuary Ocean Count events. I have been a site leader for seven years now, and I have led the Turtle Bay site location since 2014!

I love being a site leader for the Sanctuary Ocean Count because I am a strong believer in family guardians. I feel that humpback whales are my family guardians.

Through all my volunteer work, I enjoy meeting people from all walks of life with the same common interests and passion as me. Gaining new friendships and being able to share the aloha spirit with everyone we meet allows the aloha spirit to spread all over the world. And the best part is having my boyfriend of 13 years, to whom I recently got engaged at Turtle Bay, on this amazing journey with me! The sanctuary and especially the Sanctuary Ocean Count is a part of us, our journey as a couple. We hope that one day we will be able to share our wonderful experiences with our future children!

[WATCH IPOLANI'S VIDEO](#) ▶

There's an Ocean of Sanctuaries to Discover

Beautiful and awe-inspiring, they are home to miraculous wildlife that soar above and swim below the water's surface. Explore and do your part to help protect these wet and wonderful places.

Discover your story, Discover Wonder.



**National
Marine Sanctuary
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