

HAYDEN A. VEGA

Email: haydenvega@ucsb.edu

Website: haydenvega.github.io

EDUCATION

University of California Santa Barbara | *B.A. Marine Science, B.S. Environmental Studies* | 2021- Present | GPA: 3.96

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Marine Science Department, College of Creative Studies: *Santa Barbara, CA*

Teaching Assistant (January 2025 - Present)

- Assist instruction of upper-division marine science data courses in R Studio

UCSB Ocean Recoveries Lab: *Santa Barbara, CA*

Research Technician (January 2023 - Present)

- Led an independent research project studying the effect of fish-coral mutualisms on a coral's ability to respond to wounds
- Led an independent research project on the predictive ability of herbarium specimens on the functional ecology of marine macroalgae
- Led twenty research dives off the coast of French Polynesia and California

UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science and Management: *Santa Barbara, CA*

Data Research and Communication Outreach Intern (June 2022 - September 2022)

- Synthesized data visualizations regarding the impacts of marine debris in California and Hawai'i using ArcGIS and RStudio
- Drafted media and communication materials to inform the public about the effect of marine debris on wildlife

UC Santa Barbara Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration: *Santa Barbara, CA*

Laboratory Coordinator (August 2021 - March 2023)

- Led an independent study of carbon content in marine sediments as a restoration efficacy indicator
 - Organized, trained, and supervised volunteers performing invertebrate collection and analysis
-

PUBLICATIONS

(*In prep*) H Vega, N Munk, A Bui, A Stier. **Coral-dwelling fish help corals recover from wounds**

(*In prep*) H Vega, A Bui, E Donham, A Stier. **Models can predict past functional traits of herbarium macroalgae**

Acknowledged, **Debris Free Seas: Assessing Economic Losses and Impacts to Fishers, the State, and the Environment from Lost Fishing Gear**, Masters Project 2023

H Vega, A Sanford. **Deadliest Bycatch: Summarizing and Mapping a Debris Free Sea**, Poster 2022

H Vega, A Grinstead, J Huitema **Aquatic Invertebrate Monitoring at Devereux Slough**, Poster 2022

PRESENTATIONS

Western Society of Naturalists *Portland, OR (November 2024)*

- Presented a fifteen minute talk on the effect of coral-fish mutualisms on coral recovery

Bren School of Environmental Science Diversity Leader's Symposium *Goleta, CA (November 2022)*

- Panelist speaker about BIPOC experience in marine and environmental science

Bren School of Environmental Science Mantell Symposium *Goleta, CA (November 2022)*

- Presented research on the locations of southern california whale entanglements and marine debris

UCSB Undergraduate Research Symposium *Santa Barbara, CA (April 2022)*

- Presented a fifteen minute talk on water quality factors and macroinvertebrate populations within brackish wetlands

MEDIA & OUTREACH

Featured, [Hayden Vega: A First Generation, Triple Major Undergraduate](#), *UC Santa Barbara*, 2025
Author, **Nadav Kempinski**, *BREN School of Environmental Science and Management*, 2025
Artist, **Coal Oil Point: A Seaweed Mosaic**, *UC Reserve System*, 2025
Featured, **Blue Future: Citizen Science and Activism**, *Patagonia*, 2025
Co-author, [Diving in to REEF Safe Sunscreen: Meet the Scientists](#), *Avasol*, 2023
Author, **ODA: Twenty Years of Debris Free Seas**, *Ocean Defenders Alliance*, 2022
Author, [Safe Boating and Fishing Practices](#), *OC Coastkeeper*, 2020
Author, [How our Intern Brought Fishing Line Recycling to Seal Beach](#), *OC Coastkeeper*, 2020

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

College of Creative Studies Travel Grant (2024)
UCSB Environmental Studies Research Grant (2024)
Tom Rogers Scholar (2024)
SACNAS - California Sea Grant Pathways to Inclusive Research Training Program (2023)
Shoreliner Scholar (2023)
Tom Rogers Scholar (2023)
Coastal Fund Research Grant (2023)
DIVERsity in Diving Fellow (2022)
Bentson Scholar (2022)
Bren Environmental Diversity Leaders Fellowship (2022)
FUERTE Undergraduate Fellow (2022)
Hispanic Scholarship Scholar (2021)

SERVICE

Goleta Surfrider Foundation *Santa Barbara, CA* (October 2021 - Present)

- Sample and publish bacteria content of UCSB beaches

Orange County Coastkeeper *Costa Mesa, CA* (August 2020 - September 2021)

- Draft blog reports about safe boating and angling practices

Seal Beach Fishing Line Recycling Program, *Seal Beach, CA*, (August 2020 - Present)

- Founded a community program to recycle fishing line in Seal Beach, CA

Skills

AAUS Diver, NAUI Nitrox Diver, NAUI Open Water Diver, CPR & First Aid, Wilderness First Aid, RStudio, ArcGIS, ImageJ, EDNA, French biliteracy