

THOMAS RESSA

Marine conservation professional specializing in coral reef restoration, biodiversity monitoring, and ecological data management. Experienced in fieldwork, species identification, and international project collaboration.

Background in technology and systems troubleshooting provides strong problem-solving, training, and program management skills. Passionate about advancing coral reef resilience, sustainable ocean management, and community-based conservation initiatives.

CONTACT



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San Diego, California

RELEVANT SKILLS

- AAUS Scientific SCUBA Diver (Rescue & Nitrox Certified)
- DAN Rescue SCUBA Diver [O2/CPR/AED Certified, 300+ working dives logged]
- Coral Taxonomy & Identification (Caribbean & Red Sea)
- Coral Disease Identification & Treatment
- Tableau Data Visualization
- ARC GIS
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe InDesign
- MS Office Suite

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Apple – Technician (2010-2016)

- Delivered customer-facing technical solutions with precision troubleshooting and process optimization.
- Trained new staff on diagnostics and workflow systems.
- *Skills gained:* data management, hardware/software repair, client relations.

Amazon – Smart Home Engineer (2016-2020)

- Implemented and optimized smart systems, requiring technical adaptability and client-focused problem solving.
- Coordinated projects requiring stakeholder communication and system integration.
- *Skills gained:* project coordination, problem-solving under pressure, systems thinking.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Visiting Researcher - Coral Restoration Field Lead

KAUST, Marine Microbiome Lab (Saudi Arabia)

April 2025 - July 2025

- Conducted species-level cataloging of scleractinian corals with photographic documentation and data organization.
- Contributed to reef restoration efforts through monitoring protocols and coral health assessments.
- Developed and maintained structured databases for coral identification, improving data accuracy for conservation use.
- Applied taxonomic knowledge to support biodiversity assessments and ecological reporting.

Coral Farm Technician - Husbandry & Data

Coral Vita, KAUST Coral Restoration Initiative (NEOM)

January 2024 - January 2025

- Curation, husbandry, and upkeep of 300+ brood stock, and 25,000 micro-fragmented corals for large-scale restoration for the Shushah Island Project
- 3D scan and analyze brood stock colonies for volume and surface area measurements to track growth over time
- Leading staff training on the use of these technologies, including Saudi Elevate students

Research Specialist - Artificial Reef Project Manager

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology

January 2023 - January 2024

- Plan, lead and coordinate bi-weekly team meetings to ensure on-time delivery of project objectives
- Manage and support coral reef restoration studies by writing grant proposals, developing staff training materials, and ensuring field work projects completion in alignment with project deliverables
- Develop conservation narratives by engaging with stakeholders, creating community involvement campaigns and coordinating with the local sector to allow for continued marine conservation

Coral Conservation & Reef Restoration Internship

Coral Restoration Foundation

May 2022 - December 2022

- Constructed and maintained in-situ coral nurseries (cleaning, fragmentation, removing disease, collecting data and other daily maintenance)
- Collected qualitative and quantitative data via photo mosaics and completed data analysis through visualizing software (Adobe Photoshop, Tableau)
- Coordinated and led SCUBA dive programs by giving educational lectures, facilitating hands-on training, and inspiring stewardship in local communities

Graduate Student Researcher

UCSD, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

October 2020 - October 2021

- Research: Coral Reef Restoration techniques and methodologies
- Certified practitioner in coral restoration practices including micro-fragmentation, and coral larvae settlement
- Designed, built and launched a website in collaboration with the NOAA: Mission Iconic Reefs community education and stewardship work group

(Volunteer) Aquarist, Assistant Curator

Birch Aquarium, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

September 2018 - October 2020