

Hawaii Field School



One of the classic examples of an evolutionary hotspot, the Hawaiian Islands are an amazing living experiment in adaptation and the generation of biodiversity. We explore ecological systems ranging from lava-created black sand beaches and coral reefs populated with colourful fish and sea turtles, all the way to the silverswords growing high on the slopes of Mauna Kea. A key element of this investigative course examines Hawaii's energy

challenges and sustainability in everything from heating your home (yes even in Hawaii) to food production. We focus on what is known locally as the 'Big Island' of Hawaii, with its unparalleled diversity of habitat and climate, from sea level to over 13,000 ft.



The course follows a theme of waves of colonization, beginning with the emergence of the oldest islands from the sea over a hotspot in the sea floor mantle, to the first arrival of plants and animals, to settlement by the first Hawaiians from Polynesia, and finally to the less welcome invasive species in the most recent events.