

Joleah Lamb

Assistant Professor, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at UC Irvine

Irvine, CA, US

Joleah Lamb studies natural buffers for mitigating infectious diseases that threaten coral reefs in coastal regions.

Biography

Dr. Joleah Lamb is an Assistant Professor at the University of California, Irvine where she leads the UCI Healthy Oceans and People Laboratory, an innovative and interdisciplinary research program that aims to benefit ecosystems and the services they provide to society. Worldwide media attention associated with her research on disease outbreaks in the ocean has generated over 1,200 popular articles, documentaries and podcasts, including The New York Times, National Geographic, The Atlantic, New Scientist, Time, The Economist and Scientific American. Lamb is a science-based policy co-author on human-driven impacts on coral reefs for the UN Environmental Programme and co-author of the new chapter on conservation biology and global change for the 12th edition of Campbell Biology, a widely used university-level biology textbooks. She serves on numerous international working groups, including the IUCN and UN FAO committee on sustainable aquaculture and food systems, NASA program on ecological forecasting of ocean disease outbreaks and the World Bank initiative to value coral reef and related ecosystem services to support human livelihoods in developing regions. Lamb ignited a new field of study with her discovery that plastic waste is a 21st-century vessel for disease transmission in the ocean (Lamb et al. 2018, Science). This finding brought attention to plastic as an emerging threat and sparked an entirely new field bridging medicine and human health, biosecurity, conservation, engineering and materials science. Lamb also uncovered a groundbreaking ecosystem function for seagrass, revealing its use as a natural buffer for human pathogen removal for coastal communities with limited wastewater infrastructure (Lamb et al. 2017, Science). Her research provides evidence and the data needed to inform critical environmental policy decisions. Lamb is a rising thinker in the integration of public and ecosystem health systems. For outstanding contributions to transformative solutions-based research, communication and service in this field, Lamb was selected as a nominee for the 2020 Pritzker Emerging Environmental Genius, an international recognition for environmental innovators and problem-solvers that range from scientists to communicators, sustainable business leaders and economists to social justice advocates under the age of 40. She was also elected as one of eight 2020 Early Career Fellows of the Ecological Society of America.

Areas of Expertise

Coral Reefs Ecosystems, Conservation Biology, Ocean Health, Ocean Pollution, Disease Ecology, Marine Protected Areas

Education

James Cook University
PhD Marine Biology

James Cook University
MS Tropical Marine Ecology & Fisheries Biology

University of Oregon
BS Biology

Accomplishments

Early Career Fellow
2020 Ecological Society of America

Outstanding Science & Engineering Early Career Alumni Award
2018 James Cook University

University Dean's Scholar
2014 Australian Institute of Marine Science & James Cook University

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