



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2386

October 14, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Adlai Vegas
95-069 Waihonu
Wahiawa, HI 96786

Dear Mr. Vegas:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in notifying our agency about the diseased and tumor-afflicted large sea turtle seen off Haleiwa on Friday, October 9th. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter. We understand that the turtle was later also found entangled in rope, but was set free by other people in the vicinity.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist



October 13, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Bob Friedman
P. O. Box 316
Anahola, Kauai, HI 96703

Dear Mr. Friedman:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in helping our agency salvage the dead green sea turtle, Caeonia mydas, found at Anahola Bay on Wednesday, October 7, 1987. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter. An autopsy was conducted the following day when I visited Kauai. The turtle appeared to be in good health prior to being attacked by sharks, which caused substantial injury to the posterior region.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1248 or 943-1221. A packet of articles similar to this one is also being sent to Susie Kanerfield as you requested.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

cc: Paul Kawamoto
Gene Witham
Don Beacock

GHB:gr

bcc: GHB ✓
HL

Bill

October 6, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Paul Kawamoto
Division of Aquatic Resources, DLNR
1151 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Paul,

Several weeks ago we handled a turtle stranding that I thought you would find of special interest, and concern, as a recovery team member. The details are as follows.

At approximately 1 pm on Friday, September 11th, I received a telephone call from a Mr. Harry Yoshiki (tel. 548-7655) with the State Highways Division. Mr. Yoshiki was in radio contact with one of his workers at Pupukea who had found a large dead turtle on the beach. The fresh carcass, with no apparent signs of injury, was situated a short distance above the high-tide line directly behind the Marine Life Conservation District sign located at the west end of the Pupukea protected area. Mr. Yoshiki said that he had first notified the Division of Aquatic Resources, but had been told to call me. I responded by immediately sending a person out to pick the turtle up for autopsy, and to interview people in the vicinity to possibly learn more about the stranding. I asked Mr. Yoshiki to telephone Conservation Enforcement so they would be aware of this case, since it would take an hour to drive there. In addition, I notified our NMFS enforcement branch and the Western Pacific Program Office (WPPO).

The turtle (Chelonia mydas) was found to be a female measuring 80.4 cm in straight carapace length which was very close to sexual maturity. There were no signs of disease or injury, and the stomach was filled in a normal manner with algae (mainly Pterocladia capillacea). One of the persons interviewed, a tourist (and veterinarian) who said he had been in the area all day, reported that the turtle had been carried ashore that morning by fishermen who had found it drowned in their net. No exact information was given on where the net had been set, but it was believed to be nearby.

Reports of turtles drowning in nets are fairly common to hear, but this is probably the first one to be documented in or near a Marine Conservation District.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:gr

cc: Noah Pekelo, Recovery Team Consultant
Gene Witham, Recovery Team Consultant
WPPO

bcc: GHB ✓
HL

August 17, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

S.Sgt. Michael Weaver
Law Enforcement
Bellows Air Force Station 96795

Dear Sgt. Weaver:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in helping our agency retrieve the dead green sea turtle found at Bellows Air Force Station on August 12, 1987. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

GHB:ey

cc: Balazs
HL

(206) 625-5018



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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

July 17, 1987

F/SWC2

Ms. Kitty Nelson
The Seattle Aquarium
Pier 59, Waterfront Park
Seattle, Washington 98101

Dear Kitty,

Thank you very much for your recent note and the copy of the Standard Health Certificate dated 7/29/86 which I had expected to receive from either your facility or the Waikiki Aquarium when the three Hawaiian green turtles were originally returned to Hawaii last year. A formal document of this nature, signed by a veterinarian certifying "good health," must accompany any green turtles that are brought back to Hawaii. Since most turtles under these circumstances will eventually be released into the wild, there is a serious responsibility on my part (as Recovery Team Leader) to make sure they are disease-free before reentering the State. The Hawaii State Department of Agriculture serves this function, but to a great extent they are dependent on our involvement in the case of sea turtles, which they normally do not handle as an importation item.

I hope that your work is going well and that you will continue to display small turtles under cooperative programs with facilities here in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

cc: Waikiki Aquarium
Sea Life Park





Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Charles Royer, Mayor
Walter R. Hundley, Superintendent
Y. Sherry Sheng, Aquarium Director

6/17/87

Dear George

Reed Withrow from the Waitaki Aquarium
called and requested I send a copy of
the health certificate to you.

This copy is the best I have.
I hope it is sufficient for your
purposes. Please contact me if there
is anything else we can do for you.

Sincerely,

Kitty Nelson

RECEIVED
JUN 26 1987
THE SEATTLE AQUARIUM

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOO VETERINARIANS STANDARD HEALTH CERTIFICATE

No. 12

OWNER Seattle Aquarium
ADDRESS Pier 59
PHONE 525-5018 area code 206
CONSIGNEE Maliki Aquarium
ADDRESS 2777 Kalanianaʻahele Avenue
PHONE 923-4725 area code 808
DATE ISSUED 7/29/86
MODE OF TRANSPORT Land Air Sea
NAME OF AGENT Northwest Orient Airlines

ANIMAL I.D. tag and tag no.	NAME Common Scientific	PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION Age Sex Weight Other	HISTORY Date of Vaccination including name of product used Date of last deworming including name of product used Housed with other animals Recent Health problems with similar or adjacent species Given name and dosage of all drugs given prior to or during transport (include antibiotics, restraint or immobilizing drugs) Tuberculin Used and Dosage Site of injection <input type="checkbox"/> Mammalian old tuberculin <input type="checkbox"/> Bovine PPD results: <input type="checkbox"/> Pos <input type="checkbox"/> Neg <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative EIA results for Equine <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative
1. E002	Chelonia Mydas	Length 25.5 cm width 20.5 cm weight 2494 g	Broccetosis Test for Ruminants Test Dilution: 1-50 1-100 1-200 Results: <input type="checkbox"/> Method of Examination: <input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Physicochemical
2. E004	Chelonia Mydas	Length 26.5 cm width 17.0 cm weight 1770 g	
3. E005	Chelonia Mydas	Length 25.5 cm width 20.5 cm weight 2494 g	

Permit Obtained If Required Yes No

This is to certify that I have this day inspected the above named animal(s) and have found them free from evidence of communicable disease and exposure thereto.

SIGNATURE William B. Karsen
ADDRESS Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, WA 98109
APPROVED BY State Veterinarian

AAZV Member
 AAZV Assoc.
 Non Member





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March 31, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Harry Kon
Caretaker, Kawela Bay *P.O. Box 737*
Kahuku, HI 96731

Dear Mr. Kon:

I appreciated having the opportunity to speak to you by telephone this morning. Thank you for agreeing to watch for the injured sea turtle reported to be in Kawela Bay on March 28th and 29th. We are anxious to give aid to the animal, if possible, and also our Federal Enforcement Branch is interested in investigating the cause of the animal's injuries.

As promised, I am sending you several articles about sea turtles which relate to our agency's responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

cc: Kuilima Development Corp.



June 29, 1987

F/31C2

Ms. Lis Sedlak-Weinstein
11 Glenaplin Avenue
Tarragindi, Queensland 4121
Australia

Dear Lis and Steve,

Many thanks for your letter of June 3, 1987 which only arrived here a few days ago. Our mailing address was changed over a year ago, hence the delay in delivery. In any event, it was certainly good to make contact with you again, and learn that you are doing well. The years have moved by quickly!

The newspaper clippings you sent me about the Fijian turtle poisoning were certainly appreciated. Yes, I am familiar with this sporadic and often tragic problem. I already knew about the Fiji case and am in correspondence with one of the physicians (copy enclosed). A few years back there was a similar incident in Tonga. I've also enclosed a section from an FAO publication on the hawksbill turtle that describes poisoning.

When you get to Fiji, please send me your mailing address. By that time I should have identified individuals here in Hawaii that can help you with cetacean parasitology work.

Best regards, and am looking forward to seeing both of you again upon your return.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:11

bc: HL
Balazs

July 31, 1987

P/SWC2:GHB

Mr. A. Rick Davis
Science Coordinator
Department of Education
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Government of American Samoa
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799

Dear Mr. Davis:

Many thanks for your recent letter describing the new Science Mentor Program you are developing for high school students in American Samoa. I am currently involved in a similar project for high school science teachers sponsored by NSF through the College of Education at the University of Hawaii. Thus far, I view it as a very worthwhile endeavor.

I would like to participate in your program on a trial basis as a means of collecting information on Samoan sea turtles through interviews with fishermen, village elders, etc. The registration form that you provided has been filled out and returned with this letter.

On a separate but somewhat related subject, I wonder if you can tell me the dates and duration of visits to Rose Island planned by the Department of Education.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:ey
cc: Balazs ✓
HL

July 28, 1987

F/SMC2:GHB

Ms. Betty Beckett
c/o Barclays Bank
Mahe, Seychelles

Dear Ms. Beckett:

My friend and colleague, Dr. Ernie Reese, recently told me of your interest in sea turtles. He asked if I would send you an assortment of literature covering some of our research here in Hawaii. I am pleased to be of assistance in this regard. You may already be aware of the fine conservation work on sea turtles accomplished in the Seychelles by Dr. Jeanne Mortimer, under the auspices of the World Wildlife Fund.

If I can be of any additional assistance, please feel free to write to me.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
zoologist

GHB:ey

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Reese
Dr. Mortimer
Balazs
HL

July 24, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Robert Gillet
Fisheries Development Adviser
Regional Fishery Support Programme
FAO/UNDP Private Mail Bag
Suva, Fiji

Dear Bob,

Many thanks for your letter of 7 July 1987 asking for a brief editorial review of the turtle references you have compiled for Western Samoa. The list looks fine to me, except for a few minor corrections I have made (enclosed). The list should be very useful, especially in focusing attention on the overall scarcity of information on Western Samoan sea turtles. If I understand the situation correctly, the populations at that location are totally unprotected and without active management. In short, it would certainly appear that they are underprotected, overexploited, and declining at a rapid rate like so many other turtle populations in the Pacific Basin.

That was not a very happy note to close this letter, but, nevertheless, best personal regards.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:ey
cc: Balazs
HL



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

July 21, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Ms. Vicki Stern
1870 Hoone Road, #810
Koloa, Kauai, HI 96756

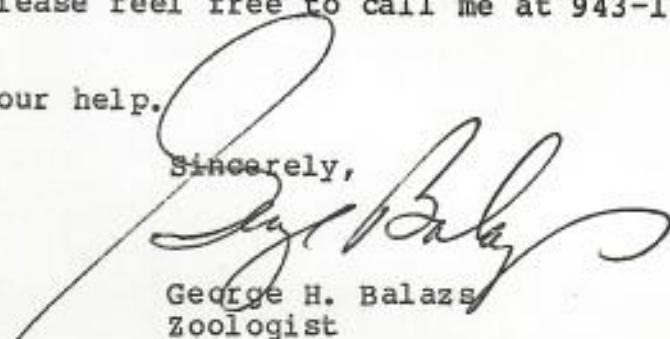
Dear Ms. Stern:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in notifying our agency about the dead sea turtle with tag No. 3408 found at Moloaa Bay, Kauai on Thursday, July 16, 1987. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter. As I mentioned to you by telephone, the turtle was originally tagged in June of 1984 at the nesting site of French Frigate Shoals, 400 miles to the northwest of Kauai.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,



George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

cc: Dan Moriarty, Kilauea Pt. Refuge
Don Heacock, DAR Kauai
WPPO
Gene Witham, Law Enforcement

post note: I was able to visit Moloaa on July 18th Saturday with the intent of examining the carcass. Unfortunately, someone had cut it up, removed the shell, and buried the remains. Under the US Endangered Species Act, it is illegal to have taken the shell unless a permit had been granted by our agency. Our enforcement branch will likely be investigating the matter.



July 21, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Toshi Kaneko
P. O. Box 519
Koloa, Kauai, HI 96796

Dear Mr. Kaneko:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in helping our agency gather information about the sea turtle that recently nested at Lawai Kai. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:ey

Enclosures

cc: Don Heacock, DAR Kauai

Balazs
HL

July 21, 1987

F/SIC2:GHB

Dr. David Carr
Executive Director
Caribbean Conservation Corporation
P. O. Box 3942
Tallahassee, FL 32315

Dear David,

It is with great honor and commitment that I accept your invitation to serve on the CCC scientific advisory committee for sea turtle research and conservation.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:ey
cc: Balazs ✓
HL



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Department of Oceanography
Division of Natural Sciences
1000 Pope Road • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Telephone: (808) 948-7633 • Cable Address: UNIHAW

July 15, 1987

William Paty, Chairman
Department of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

Dear Mr. Paty:

Today I met with Richard Shomura, Director of the National Marine Fishery Service, and we discussed at length the idea of launching a long term cooperative program to study Hawaii's nearshore fishery resources. Mr. Shomura is supportive of the idea and is enthusiastic about exploring the potential of organizing a cooperative program with the University and the state. As I mentioned in my last letter to you, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council are also willing participants. The focus of the program would be to analyze the effects of 1) pollution, 2) habitat destruction, 3) fishing practices and 4) natural events on Hawaii's nearshore marine resources. The scope of the study, however, would not necessarily be limited to fisheries but could involve the total marine environment including socio-economic problems and solutions.

Mr. Shomura and I discussed a chronology for the program and the need to develop a formal cooperative agreement. Perhaps the next step would be for the three of us to meet and discuss these and other aspects of the program.

As an aid to developing a formal agreement, Mr. Shomura has agreed to discuss at the meeting the Tripartite Cooperative Agreement for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands study of which he was the major architect. We might also consider an agenda for the fall to include a technical workshop to establish where we stand in terms of past available information and the present scientific understanding of the problem. Following this workshop, a series of Interactive Planning Sessions with user groups with input from all islands would help to identify priorities. Sometime after this, a formal agreement could be signed by participating agencies and a specific research program could be developed perhaps in time to coincide with next year's legislative session.

Mr. William Paty
July 15, 1987
Page 2

In view of summer commitments for all of us and the fact that this program could well become a major undertaking, I suggest we wait until mid-September before scheduling our meeting. I will call your office to confirm a specific time and place.

The above scenario is quite tentative and only suggested here to serve as a starting point of discussion. In order that the program come close to achieving its goals, strong input and endorsement from the state would seem to be essential. I look forward to working with you on this very important and exciting program.

Sincerely,

RICHARD W. GRIGG, Marine Biologist
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

RWG:kat
cc:Richard Shomura



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
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July 17, 1987

Ms. Irene Pololu
Chief Dispatcher
Turtle Bay Hilton
and Country Club
P. O. Box 187
Kahuku, HI 96731

Dear Ms. Pololu:

My colleague John Henderson has forwarded me a copy of your letter (dated July 12, 1987) concerning the dead sea turtle recently found on your beach.

Both for research, management and enforcement purposes, it is very important that our agency have the opportunity to obtain all sea turtles that come ashore in a sick, injured, or dead condition. To meet this goal we have an informal cooperative program with the State of Hawaii, Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE). They have a 24-hour hotline telephone number (548-5918) through which messages are relayed to us on weekends, holidays, and after hours. Their number is listed along with several others on the "Turtle Protection" poster I have enclosed. The DOCARE 24-hour number is also listed in the telephone directory under the State Department of Land and Natural Resources. If a turtle is dead, such as in this recent case, it can be removed from your resort beach and stored in a plastic bag until our arrival. If a refrigerator or freezer is available for such storage, it can even be held overnight or longer if necessary.

Sea turtles, as protected species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, are protected in both their living and dead state. It is illegal to take or possess the shell, even if the turtle is already dead when found. I mention this so that, as appropriate, you can alert your hotel guests and avoid any problems that might inadvertently arise.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (943-1221) or the NMFS Enforcement Branch (541-2727). In closing I should mention that, as the Leader of the Hawaiian Sea Turtle Recover Team, I am delighted with the name chosen for your hotel resort.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

cc: DOCARE (Noah Pekelo)
WPPQ
NMFS Law Enforcement





THE TURTLE BAY HILTON
AND COUNTRY CLUB

July 12, 1987

John R. Henderson
National Marine Fisheries Service
257 D Dole Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Dear Mr. Henderson,

I'm so sorry that I did not contact you earlier, but I would like to take this time and opportunity to thank you for your prompt attention in sending the poster and information brochure on the Sea Turtles. I am hoping to educate our staff on the Sea Turtles and the information we have received from you will assist us greatly.

This past weekend we had found another Sea Turtle (dead) on our beach and have tried in vain to calling your office and all numbers listed on your brochure. Since we had been unsuccessful in contacting anyone, we had to disposed of the turtle ourselves. Is it possible to have the names and phone numbers of the Game Wardens in our area so that we may have someone to contact during off hours and holidays?

Again, I would like to thank you for your assistance and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Irene Pololu
Chief Dispatcher
Turtle Bay Hilton & Country Club



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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

September 5, 1986

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Alanieta Niumatasere
Drue
Tavuki
Kadavu, Fiji

Dear Niumatasere,

We were most pleased to read your letter dated August 4, 1986, which just arrived here yesterday. Thank you very much for taking the time to report the capture of one of our tagged sea turtles, Numbers 3504 and 3505. I tagged this animal at Rose Island in American Samoa on November 10, 1980, while it was ashore laying eggs. Rose Island is about 125 miles to the east of Pago Pago. The island is a wildlife refuge for seabirds and sea turtles.

Your recovery of this tagged turtle represents the first such report we have ever received for Rose Island. We are therefore most anxious to hear from you again regarding further information about the turtle, exactly where and how it was captured, and the condition it was in. Your assistance will be most valuable in helping us to learn more about the biology of these interesting and important animals. My questions are as follows:

1. How was the turtle captured? By hand, net, harpoon, or what fishing method?
2. Was the turtle in good health when captured? Did it seem normal, or did it show signs of sickness, disease, or injury?
3. Was the turtle caught in an area where other turtles of this same kind regularly live? What was the turtle doing when captured? Feeding, sleeping, or laying eggs?
4. If the turtle was butchered and cleaned to be eaten, what kind of food material did you find in its stomach?
5. Have you ever heard of anyone else in your area catching a turtle with a tag on it?

I am sorry that it has taken so long for me to respond to you, but your letter to us must have been delayed in the mail. You mailed it to the correct address shown on the tag. However, my current direct mailing address is:

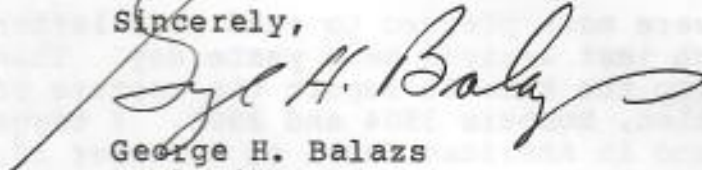
National Marine Fisheries Service
2570 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822-2396



Please write to me at this address, sending your letter by airmail. I have enclosed U.S. \$2.00 to cover the cost of your airmail postage. Also, in my next letter, I will be sending you a large color poster showing all the different kinds of sea turtles, as well as several booklets and other literature about sea turtles.

Again, we greatly appreciate receiving your important letter, and anxiously look forward to hearing from you again.

Sincerely,



George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

cc: Richard Wass, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

GHB:vi

bc: Balazs
HL

WILSON WILSON
200-1234-5678

June 29, 1987

F/BMC2

Dr. K. E. G. Krishnan
Consultant Physician
The Ministry of Health
Labasa Hospital
Fiji

Dear Dr. Krishnan:

I am most appreciative for your letter of 9 June 1987 which provided substantial detail on the recent Fijian turtle poisoning tragedy. Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to my inquiry in such a comprehensive manner.

Turtle poisonings of this type are known to have occurred sporadically and quite unexpectedly at widely separated locations over the past two centuries. In addition, certain Pacific islanders, such as the Hawaiians, have traditionally called the hawksbill turtle "kapu," thereby suggesting it was not suitable for consumption. Unfortunately, as the excerpts I sent you indicated, almost nothing is known about what causes a turtle to be poisonous, nor what constitutes the best treatment for the victims.

The case in Fiji is exceedingly well documented as the result of your fine efforts. Consequently, I would like to see this information made available to a larger audience. I wonder if you would permit me to have these facts published in the Marine Turtle Newsletter? Naturally you would receive full credit. With a brief introduction and minor modification, the letter you sent me could be published as written. There are no set style standards for the Marine Turtle Newsletter, and notes of an informal nature are frequently printed.

If you could allow me to submit this information, there are two points that it would be good to clarify.

1. Approximately how large was the hawksbill? Since 43 people shared the turtle, it would appear to have been fairly large, although each portion could have been very small. Would the turtle have been 100 or 200 lbs in weight or even larger? Any estimation of size that you can provide will be valuable to include in the documentation.

2. You stated that 200-300 turtles are caught and eaten per year in the region of Nakudamu. Approximately how many of these turtles are hawksbills? Are the hawksbill turtles that are commonly eaten as large as the one that caused the recent poisoning?

Again, thank you for writing to me. I look forward to hearing from you again when your time permits.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:11

bc: HL
Balazs ✓



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July 2, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

MEMORANDUM FOR: F/SWR1 - Gene Nitta
THRU: F/SWC2 - William G. Gilmartin
Richard S. Shomura
FROM: F/SWC2 - George H. Balazs
SUBJECT: Response to your request that I investigate a sea turtle entanglement problem at Makai Pier

The reports that you referred to me of sea turtles becoming entangled and hooked by fishing lines at Makai Pier were investigated on the afternoon of July 1, 1987. A management problem clearly exists there that adversely impacts sea turtles. This situation has probably been present for some time now. A brief summary of my findings and recommendations are as follows.

- 1) Juvenile green turtles are regularly being entangled, hooked, and taking bait in conjunction with the numerous pole-and-line fishermen that use the pier. Some fishermen are intentionally feeding the turtles, thereby further attracting small turtles to the area.
- 2) Spear fishermen commonly work the reefs adjacent to the pier.
- 3) The same subadult green turtle (65-70 cm) that has been seen daily around the fishing lines is almost certainly one of Sea Life Park's captive-reared turtles released at Makai Pier in past months. I watched this turtle for 15 min and noted its "tame" behavior and presence of a tag on the front flipper.
- 4) Personnel of Sea Life Park need to immediately capture this turtle and release it at a more appropriate location. Steve Kaiser was supposed to initiate this action today (as I reported to you by telephone). The turtle's capture needs to be confirmed.
- 5) No additional turtles should be released at Makai Pier.
- 6) The administrator and tenants of Makai Pier (State owned?) should be informed about the protected status of sea turtles, and what action to take if a turtle is entangled, hooked, otherwise injured or is seen being taken in violation of law.
- 7) Permanent signs notifying fishermen of the protected status of sea turtles, such as have been posted at some State boat ramps, should be placed on the pier.
- 8) Steps should be taken to discourage or prohibit people from intentionally feeding turtles at the pier and thereby encouraging their residency. Perhaps a special permanent sign to this effect should be posted.



9) The entanglement and hooking problem needs to be monitored on a continuing basis to determine if other management actions are needed to protect the turtles.

On a separate but related management issue, I noticed this past weekend that there is no "sea turtles are protected" sign posted at the boat ramp and recreation center at Bellows Air Force Station. I recommend that one be placed there.

May 4, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. William Fielder
General Delivery
Honolulu Airport
Honolulu, HI 96820

Dear Mr. Fielder:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in helping our agency respond to the sick sea turtle found beached at Hawaii Kai on Saturday, May 2nd. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter. Unfortunately the turtle died later that afternoon.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or areas of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221. If you would like to talk to someone in our Federal Enforcement Branch, please call 541-2727.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

GHB

cc: Sea Life Park

bc: Balazs
HL

June 1, 1987

F/SNC2

Dr. Tsann-Yang Tzou
Research Fellow
Division of Conservation & Research
Kenting National Park
272 Kenting Road, Hengshun Pingtung
Taiwan, Republic of China

Dear Dr. Tzou,

I am writing to thank you for your most interesting letter of May 15, 1987 reporting the recovery of a large green turtle with tags 4326 and 4327. Our agency is currently using tags on sea turtles that bear the "HMB" inscription.

The turtle that you documented was originally tagged by our cooperating researchers in the Pohnpei region of the Federated States of Micronesia. The turtle was tagged while nesting at Oroluk Acoli on June 2, 1986. Oroluk is located at approximately 7°35'N, 155°10'E, and has only a very small resident population of native Micronesians. Oroluk is said to be the most important nesting site for green turtles in the Pohnpei islands. However, our cooperative researchers have worked there during the 1985 and 1986 nesting seasons and have only been able to tag a total of 15 turtles. The Oroluk nesting colony appears to be severely depleted and in danger of becoming extinct.

We would very much like to learn more about the tagged turtle you found, as well as the marine habitat in the region where it was captured. Your assistance with the following questions will be greatly appreciated.

- 1). By what method was the turtle captured? Was it accidentally caught in another fishery, or was the fishing effort directed toward sea turtles?
- 2). Are other turtles known to regularly occur in the area where the tagged turtle was captured?
- 3). Have you heard of any other sea turtles with tags, past or present, having been captured in your area or anywhere else along the coast of your country?
- 4). Do the people in your area eat sea turtles or have a commercial fishery for them?

5). Are there any known nesting beaches for sea turtles in your area? If so, what species are involved?

6). What were the circumstances, and where was the turtle held, between the time it was captured on April 18th and later released on May 7th?

If any photographs were taken of the turtle, we would be grateful to receive a few copies. Again thank you for writing to report this important discovery. We look forward to hearing from you again. Under separate cover I am sending you an assortment of literature covering our work with sea turtles here in the Hawaiian Islands.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:jn
bc: Balazs
HL

May 28, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Steven Won
66-729 Farrington Highway
Wailua, HI 96791

Dear Mr. Won:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in helping our agency retrieve the dead sea turtle found at Mokuleia on Tuesday, May 26th. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

GHB:11

bc: Balazs
HL

May 27, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Paul Schuft
P. O. Box 1176
Haleiwa, HI 96712

Dear Mr. Schuft:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in helping our agency retrieve the dead sea turtle you found near your home on Tuesday, May 26th. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

GHB:11

bc: HL
Balazs

May 26, 1987

F/SNC2

Mr. Jerry Coffee
Mr. Gene Lynn
87-619 Farrington Hwy.
Waianae, HI 96797

Dear Jerry and Gene:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in rescuing an entangled green turtle found in an unattended gill net on Monday, May 25th off Waianae. We very much appreciate your quick action in this matter which undoubtedly saved the turtle's life.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations and the eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

cc: Noah Pekelo, State
DOCARE
Gene Witham, LE

May 22, 1987

Mr. Wendell Liu
961 Alahaki Street
Kailua, HI 96734

Dear Mr. Liu:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the concern you demonstrated by bringing in what you felt was a sick turtle found floating several miles from shore on Tuesday, May 19th. The turtle was an adult female olive ridley, Lepidochelys olivacea, a species that occurs fairly often in offshore waters surrounding the Hawaiian Islands. It's nearest breeding grounds, however, are along the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica. The ridley's behavior and habitat usage are quite different from green turtles, Chelonia mydas, that live in shallow coastal waters of Hawaii, and usually rapidly swim away when approached by man.

We found the ridley to be in excellent condition, very active with no health problems or injuries. It was tagged with permanent metal flipper tags and released two miles offshore on Wednesday, May 20th.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221. In addition, I encourage you to telephone our law enforcement branch at 541-2727 to report the circumstances of the person that tried to buy the turtle from you after you brought it aboard your boat.

Again, many thanks for your concern.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GBB:gs

cc: Gene Witham, LE
Noan Pekeio



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

May 19, 1987 F/SWF2

Mr. Flinn Curren
Pohnpei State Government
Marine Resources Division
P. O. Box B
Kolonias, Pohnpei
Federated States of Micronesia 96941

Dear Flinn,

Many thanks for your recent letter, the tagging data, and draft note for the Marine Turtle Newsletter authored by Clay Edson. I am delighted to receive this important information and certainly commend your people for doing such a fine job. I hope that more turtles can be tagged and protected at Oroluk this year. It will be very exciting when we receive our first long-distance tag recovery from one of these animals. Are there any traditional stories among the people of Pohnpei as to where the turtles go when they are not nesting at Oroluk? I will notify you immediately when a tag recovery is reported to us.

In the tagging list you provided, there were four tags that were not entered among the consecutive numbers. They were 4322, 4328, 4330 and 4334. I assume that these tags were lost or for some reason not applied. Please confirm this point for me so that no confusion develops in coming years. If the tags became bent and unusable, ideally they should be returned to me, thereby eliminating any future problems. Also, I note that you should now have 12 tags (4339 - 4350) on hand. If work at Oroluk will take place again this season, let me know and I'll send you more right away.

I hope that the note for Marine Turtle Newsletter will be submitted for publication in the very near future. Your findings are important and need to be made known to the scientific and conservation community at large. To date, the only information about nesting turtles at Oroluk appears in Peter Pritchard's 1977 booklet "Marine Turtles of Micronesia". A copy of this section has been enclosed in case its not easily available to you. I recommend that Clay Edson reference and discuss parts of this earlier report, especially;

- 1). The numbers of turtles previously nesting per night as stated by Pritchard;
- 2). The recommendation that Oroluk be designated a Turtle Sanctuary, and that the few people in residence be relocated in order to properly protect the turtles from being eaten;
- 3). The statement by Pritchard about a "split" nesting season at Oroluk, and whether or not any evidence was found for such a pattern occurring at the present time.



At this point there is no question in my mind that the Oroluk nesting colony is on the verge of becoming extinct.

As requested, I have enclosed several items that might be useful as educational material about sea turtles for school age children. In addition, I have asked Jack Woody to send you a free copy of the slide show "America's Sea Turtles" recently produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I will also be trying to identify funds that can be used to support the Pohnpei/Oroluk turtle project.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George H. Balazs". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:jn

cc : Mike Gawel, FSM Chief of Marine Resources
Jack Woody, FWS Sea Turtle Coordinator

June 4, 1986

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Colin Limpus
National Parks and Wildlife
Pallarenda
Townsville 4810
Australia

Dear Col,

Many thanks for your letter of November 25, 1985 explaining your views and findings on "developmental migrations" of Australian sea turtles. I certainly appreciated your candid remarks that you have no tag recoveries that support the idea of "shifts to different coastal developmental habitat" occurring during the life of a turtle. This negative data certainly seems significant, in view of the fact that you have tagged thousands of turtles of all sizes at various Australian feeding grounds. As I've probably emphasized to you before, our tag recoveries here in Hawaii all show that no movement by immature (or adult) green turtles takes place between resident feeding areas.

I look forward to seeing you at WATS II. Best regards.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

cc: Balazs
HL

SOUTHWEST FISHERIES CNTR
HONOLULU LABORATORY
2570 DOLE STREET
HONOLULU HI 96822-2396

May 15, 1987

F/SWC2

Ms. Sharon Pisciotta
c/o The Deli
Keela Pier
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Dear Sharon,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in reporting the live sea turtle accidentally caught at Keela Pier on Sunday, May 10th. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

GHB:11

bc: HL
Balazs

May 8, 1987

F/SWC2

Mr. John Casey and
Mr. Wes Pratt
Narragansett Laboratory
National Marine Fisheries
Service, NOAA
Narragansett, RI 02882

Dear Mr. Casey and Mr. Pratt:

In your work with great white sharks off Long Island, I wonder if you have ever found or heard of sea turtle parts being recovered from stomach contents. Any information or leads that you can provide me on this subject would be greatly appreciated.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:11

bc: HL
Balazs



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

June 8, 1987

F/SWC:GHB

MEMORANDUM FOR: William G. Gilmartin
FROM: George H. Balazs
SUBJECT: Results of recent turtle tagging at Palaaau,
Molokai, with fisherman Ed Medeiros

Service order 40-JJNF-7-070 issued to Ed Medeiros was fulfilled during the period June 2-4, 1987 when Robert Forsyth and I traveled to Molokai to tag green turtles incidentally caught during "bullpen" net fishing. A total of 27 turtles were captured, 4 of which had been previously tagged in the same general area over the past 4 years. One of these turtles that measured only 52 cm was extensively afflicted with tumors over its eyes and front flippers. No tumors were present on the animal when it was last seen 3 years ago. Ed Medeiros indicated that several other turtles with tumors had recently been captured and released, in contrast with past years when none had ever been found. From these observations, it would appear that the incidence of this disease is increasing in range within Hawaii, as well as in magnitude.

Our turtle tagging work on Molokai in collaboration with Ed Medeiros and State Aquatic Biologist Bill Puleloa constitutes the most cost efficient, productive and worthwhile research of green turtles in foraging pastures that we have initiated in the main Hawaiian Islands. In spite of this fact, due to travel restrictions and funding constraints we have only been able to visit Molokai to do this work about once every 18 months. It would be highly advantageous to increase this field schedule to three times a year. I hope that this will be possible next fiscal year.

On a related note, Ed Medeiros is planning to construct new panels of bullpen net to replace some of his existing gear. He plans to sell the older nets which, due to numerous small holes, are now much less efficient at herding fish. However, the nets are still very effective for herding and live-capture of turtles. Ed wanted to know if we would be interested in purchasing these nets. As yet, no price has been quoted. I want to recommend that we seriously consider buying the nets for the following reasons: 1) they have considerable potential for use in turtle research activities at several select sites here on Oahu; and 2) if someone else purchases them for commercial fishing on Molokai, the new owner may not be nearly as charitable toward sea turtles as Ed has been in releasing them from his net. Ed's bullpen net is somewhat unique to Hawaii in that there are only two like it in the entire State.





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Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

June 11 1987

F/SWC2

MEMORANDUM FOR: F/SWR1 Gene Nitta
F/SWR1 John Naughton

THRU: F/SWC2 William G. Gilmartin *WGG*
F/SWC2 Richard S. Shomura

FROM: F/SWC2 George H. Balazs *GB*

SUBJECT: NMFS efforts and responsibilities to protect green turtle foraging habitat at West Beach, and the disturbing recent start of "swimming lagoon" construction allowed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

This memo of concern comes just a short time after the one I wrote to you about West Beach on June 5, 1987.

I have only recently been able to read the correspondence from the Army Corps of Engineers dated May 19, 1987, responding to Gene Nitta's letter of May 6th regarding reinitiation of Section 7 consultation for the West Beach development. I am very disturbed by this response because it seeks to delay the reinitiation of consultation for 3 months, when in fact ample information now exists, already collected by both the developer's consultant and NMFS personnel (John Naughton). Furthermore, the Corps' letter indicates that "in-water construction" will not start until early August, thereby presumably allowing sufficient time to consider additional data, and whether or not to even reinitiate consultation. However, the letter fails to say that digging of the lagoons behind the shoreline is planned to start now, thereby making it a foregone conclusion that the in-water project will occur without the benefit of conservation measures or prudent alternatives coming from reinitiation of consultation. It would appear that the lines of communication from the developer and the Corps to our agency are not as open and responsive as had been anticipated.

Another part of the Corps' letter that is of considerable concern is paragraph two, where it is said .."it was mutually agreed that all prudent measures for protecting sea turtles during construction are included in the present construction procedures." Again, the key point under consideration here is not the protection of individual turtles during construction and blasting, but rather the destruction and modification of prime foraging habitat, including cumulative and secondary long term impacts (see my memo of June 5).



The developer's baseline monitoring report on algae, which we just received a few days ago, seems to provide good data on what now exists at the project construction site. However, the question of impacts, losses, and alterations of habitat is not even mentioned. Nor is any meaningful relationship discussed between the foraging habitat and the turtles. In fact, for some reason, more attention is given in the report to the edible aspects of the algae in relation to people.

cc: E.C. Fullerton



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

June 5, 1987

F/SWC2: GHB

MEMORANDUM FOR: F/SWR1 Eugene T. Nitta
F/SWR1 John J. Naughton

THROUGH: F/SWC2 Richard S. Shomura
F/SWC2 William G. Gilmartin

FROM: F/SWC2 George H. Balazs

SUBJECT: Habitat protection for green turtles in the
vicinity of West Beach, Oahu.

Given the best information that we now have available, there is virtually no doubt in my mind that the numerous turtles seen resting immediately off West Beach in deep water utilize the Pterocladia that grows profusely on the limestone bench the developer intends to blast through and substantially modify. There has to be more than just a casual, or coincidental relationship between the close proximity of the turtles and the prime forage offered by the Pterocladia. The developer's consultant has, in fact, already established this point when, on October 21, 1986, nine turtles were seen clustered and active near the Pterocladia. It is indeed regrettable on the consultant's part that this critical information was not conveyed to us in a timely manner, instead of 6 months later. It is also unfortunate that a careful, thorough study by an expert phycologist has still not been accomplished to determine environmental and ecological parameters of the Pterocladia. What exists there now? What exactly will be lost or modified from blasting, groundwater discharge alteration, and intensive human use if this shoreline modification is undertaken? Lew Consiglieri, in his letter written over a year ago, requested critical information of this nature.

At this late date, I don't feel that going out and capturing a few turtles to pump stomachs for food contents will accomplish very much. For one thing, although I am confident the Pterocladia plays an important role in the turtles overall nutrition, that does not mean they feed upon it each and every day of the year. Tidal cycles may very well render the alga unavailable on certain days or weeks. Instead, I recommend that all effort now be focused on the foraging habitat itself with respect to protecting it from significant modification. If I understand it correctly, this is the goal of Section 7 consultation.

cc: F/SWR E.C. Fullerton





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

June 5, 1987

F/SWC2: GHB

MEMORANDUM FOR: F/SWR1 Eugene T. Nitta
F/SWR1 John J. Naughton

THROUGH: F/SWC2 Richard S. Shomura
F/SWC2 William G. Gilmartin

FROM: F/SWC2 George H. Balazs

SUBJECT: Habitat protection for green turtles in the
vicinity of West Beach, Oahu.

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At this late date, I don't feel that going out and capturing a few turtles to pump stomachs for food contents will accomplish very much. For one thing, although I am confident the Pterocladia plays an important role in the turtles overall nutrition, that does not mean they feed upon it each and every day of the year. Tidal cycles may very well render the alga unavailable on certain days or weeks. Instead, I recommend that all effort now be focused on the foraging habitat itself with respect to protecting it from significant modification. If I understand it correctly, this is the goal of Section 7 consultation.

cc: F/SWR E.C. Fullerton



June 2, 1987

F/SNC2

Hiroyuki Tachikawa
Ogasawara Marine Center
Byobudani, Chichijima
Ogasawara-mura
Tokyo 100-21
Japan

Dear Dr. Tachikawa,

It was with great pleasure that I received your letter of May 3, 1987 responding to my interest in the research of sea turtles at the Ogasawara Marine Center. Thank you for the three publications that you provided. I will be able to have portions of them translated into English.

I also appreciated receiving the photos showing a green turtle with tumors. These growths certainly appear to be identical to the ones we now commonly find on Hawaiian green turtles. They have been identified by the Smithsonian Institution as "fibropapillomas". A note which I have authored on this subject has been enclosed for your information. If you find more turtles with tumors, I encourage you to send preserved tissue sections to Dr. John Harshbarger (data form and address enclosed).

I enjoyed having the opportunity to meet Mr. Kazuo Horikoshi at the 1985 and 1986 sea turtle workshops. I understand that his studies at the University of Florida are coming along exceedingly well. It is with deep regret that I note that Dr. Archie Carr passed away recently.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

GHB:jn
bc:Balazs
HL



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2398

September 25, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Colonel Samuel N. Liberatore
Acting Defense Deputy for Operations
U.S. Army Strategic Defense Command
P. O. Box 1500
Huntsville, Alabama 35807-3801

Dear Colonel Liberatore:

Thank you for your letter of August 26, 1987 requesting that I provide comments on your draft environmental assessment for the STARBIRD launch project relating to Wake Island. Two of my publications on sea turtles are cited in this document, as well as a "personal communication" (telephone inquiry to me?) dated 1987. I would like to clarify and correct several items in this regard. A reprint of my paper "Status of Sea Turtles in the Central Pacific Ocean" (Smithsonian Institution Press) has been enclosed with certain highlighted sections for your information.

On page 8 of the STARBIRD document, the first sentence states "No threatened or endangered terrestrial (my underscore) species of plant or animal is known or expected to occur on Wake." The paragraph then goes on to say that certain threatened or endangered species of sea turtles inhabit or may inhabit the nearshore waters. On page 246 of my enclosed paper, I stated "Both immature and adult green turtles (Chelonia mydas) are regularly observed foraging in the lagoon and along the outside perimeter of the atoll." The green turtle, as you know, is listed and protected as a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. It is my opinion that your paragraph is confusing because it leaves the impression that there are no threatened or endangered species at Wake because they are not terrestrial and "on" the island. The U.S. territorial waters surrounding Wake are clearly under U.S. (Air Force) jurisdiction, as are the threatened green turtles living and foraging commonly within a few dozen meters of the shoreline. My point here becomes particularly ^{Hawaii} relevant in view of your Appendix H ("to be published in local and Florida newspapers") where the sentence appears "No threatened or endangered species are known or suspected on Wake Island." The planned newspaper notice then goes on to discuss non-threatened and non-endangered (but protected) seabirds, but fails to make any mention of sea turtles, specifically the green turtle.

Even though the planned construction action will take place on land, there is the distinct potential for adverse impact on green turtles and their nearshore habitat, including the marine vegetation upon which they forage. A spent rocket, or post-launch destruction, could impact this surrounding nearby habitat, both in



the lagoon and along the outside perimeter of the atoll. Also, I note on page 3 that "...there may be some eye safety hazard to the civilian population...due to the nature of the Shuttle sensor." Green turtles are air breathing reptiles, consequently they are often at or near the ocean surface. Would not an "eye safety hazard" also exist for these nearby turtles (and seabirds also)? What is the nature of this hazard? I note that the document contains a section, starting on page 23, titled "Operations Phase," where environmental impacts are discussed for the "Cape Canaveral Air Force Station" component of the project. There should be a counterpart section "Operations Phase" for Wake Island, but I note that one has not been included. This would seem essential for an important environmental document of this nature.

In the section on Cape Canaveral (page 24), it is stated that "Although it is theoretically possible for the booster casing or debris from a destroyed vehicle to hit a sea turtle, the probability of this occurring is considered extremely remote (less than a one-in-a-million chance)." Would the chances of a direct hit at Wake be equally remote? In what concentrates do the green turtles occur around Wake? Are there special foraging habitat sites that should be given special consideration for protection? I believe these are important questions that need to be answered for your STARBIRD project. In my enclosed paper, on page 250, I listed the following recommendation: "Military agencies of the U.S. government administering islands covered in this report should undertake a thorough investigation of the aggregations of sea turtles occurring at such sites."

If I can be of any additional assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

cc: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Honolulu
NMFS Western Pacific Program Office

January 29, 1988

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Greg Forbes
9157 Portson Drive
Temple City, CA 91780

Dear Greg,

Enclosed in the assortment of literature that I promised to send you covering some of my work with sea turtles. Thank you for calling. I appreciated having the opportunity to learn about your plans for nutritional research of green turtles in Australia with Colin Limpus. I look forward to hearing from you again as your project progresses.

Sincerely,

George H. Balass
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:gr

bcc: GHB ✓
HL

January 28, 1968

F/SWC2

Miss Kris Lundstrom
1014 U.S. Highway
Roundup, MT 59072

Dear Kris,

The letter that you wrote to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been forwarded to our agency since we conduct research on fish and other ocean life in Hawaii.

The answer to your question is, yes, there have been cases of people being killed here while swimming in the ocean. Shark attacks occasionally occur in Hawaii, as they do nearly everywhere else in the world where people go into the ocean. A published list of all the known cases has been enclosed for you to read. Please remember that each year many more people die in the ocean from drowning because they did not obey safety rules or learn how to be a good swimmer. Shark attacks are therefore a minor cause of death in Hawaii compared to other kinds of ocean accidents.

You may also be interested to know that each year a few people become ill in Hawaii from eating certain fish. This poisoning is called "Ciguatera" and it is also known to occur at other tropical and subtropical areas. I have enclosed an easy-to-read article on this subject that recently appeared in the Honolulu newspaper.

I wish you success with your class project. Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Shumate
Director, Honolulu Laboratory

Enclosures

GHB:gr

bcc: RSS
WGC
GHB ✓
HL

January 29, 1988

F/SVC2:GHB

Mr. Scott Lebgerwood
317 Ilimalia Loop
Kailua, HI 96734

Dear Scott,

Thank you for your recent telephone call requesting information for the 5th grade class report you are preparing on the leatherback turtle, Dermochelys coriacea. I am pleased to hear of your interest in learning more about this endangered animal. The literature I have enclosed should be helpful to you, although I also recommend that you visit your public library in Kailua.

Good luck with your report.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:ey
cc: Balazs
HL

January 27, 1986

F/SWC2:GHB

Miss Jennifer Tillie
1895-S Mahanah Circle
Kailua, HI 96734

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for your recent telephone call requesting information for a school report you are doing on the green sea turtle, *Chelonia mydas*. I am pleased to hear of your interest in learning more about this endangered animal. The literature I have enclosed should be helpful to you, although I also recommend that you visit your public library in Kailua.

Good luck with your report.

Sincerely,

The two dozen or so turtles that were almost certainly green turtles, *Chelonia mydas*, that were collected in 1987 were almost certainly green turtles. The benthic alga (*Ulva*), *Phacelodis* *sp.*, which has been shown to be the exclusive food source of the green turtles at Punaluu is 500 miles to the west of Honolulu (see attached literature). The species of turtle that has been reported nesting at Punaluu is the Hawaiian monk seal, *Monachus* *sp.*. This turtle does not forage in shallow water, but rather along the coastline's coral encrusted bottom in deeper water (between 50m to 100 feet or so). The monk seal is a critically endangered species in Hawaiian waters by reason of its very low numbers, its limited and in many cases impacted nesting habitat, and its "leak-alike" problem when illegal green turtle nesting occurs. Your concern about habitat-problems for nesting turtles (monks) at Punaluu is justified. However, the most immediate threat to sea turtles at Punaluu comes from direct and illegal killing in marine habitat that has consistently occurred for many years ago. The green turtle is the intended target of this effort. The Hawaiian Sea Turtle Recovery Team is aware of this and other problems, and has incorporated appropriate recommendations for action in the Draft Recovery Plan. The plan is now undergoing review within the National Marine Fisheries Service and should be completed within the next few months.

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:ey
cc: Balazs
HL

January 26, 1988

F/SWC2:GHB

Ms. Puanani Woo
4300 Waiialae Ave. #601A
Honolulu, HI 96816

Dear Ms. Woo:

A copy of your letter to Mr. Paty dated December 22, 1987, and his response of January 4, 1988, have been forwarded to my office. I certainly appreciate knowing about your interest in the conservation of Hawaiian sea turtles and the habitat upon which they depend, such as at Punaluu Bay in the Kau District. Punaluu Bay, and the immediate adjacent coastline, is probably the most concentrated and highly-visible site for foraging green turtles, Cheonia mydas, throughout the Hawaiian Islands. In recent years we have tagged and studied turtles at this important location in collaboration with the Marine Option Program of the University of Hawaii at Hilo. I have enclosed two articles describing this work, as well as other literature about sea turtles in general.

The two dozen or so turtles that you saw in August of 1987 were almost certainly green turtles feeding on the benthic alga (limu), Prorocladia capillacea, that grows on rocks close to shore. The Hawaiian green turtle is a migrant breeder which has been shown to nest almost exclusively at French Frigate Shoals 500 miles to the northwest of Honolulu (see enclosed literature). The species of sea turtle that has been recorded nesting at Punaluu is the hawksbill, Eretmochelys imbricata. This turtle does not forage inside Punaluu Bay, but rather along the coastline's coral encrusted bottom in deeper water offshore down to 100 feet or so. The hawksbill is a critically endangered species in Hawaiian waters by reason of its very low numbers, its limited and in many cases impacted nesting habitat, and its "look-alike" problem when illegal green turtle hunting occurs. Your concern about habitat-problems for nesting turtles (hawksbills) at Punaluu is justified. However, the more immediate threat to sea turtles at Punaluu comes from direct and illegal killing in marine habitat that has consistently occurred for many years now. The green turtle is the intended target of this effort. The Hawaiian Sea Turtle Recovery Team is aware of this and other problems, and has incorporated appropriate recommendations for action in the draft Recovery Plan. The plan is now undergoing review within the National Marine Fisheries Service and should be completed within the next few months.

In closing, I should briefly mention that the effective management and recovery of sea turtles are, unlike many stocks of fish, heavily constrained by the turtles' own biological characteristics. These include a relatively slow growth rate, delayed sexual maturity, and low annual reproductive effort. The protection and recovery of Hawaiian sea turtles will not be an easy task, but I am pleased to report that we are making a good start. Again, thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

cc: W. G. Gilmartin
R. S. Shouura
W. W. Paty
E. C. Fullerton

GHB:gr

bcc: GHB ✓
HL

January 22, 1988

F/SVC2:GHB

Mrs. Juanita Hawkins
88-063D Aleule Street
Wailua, HI 96791

Dear Mrs. Hawkins:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for notifying our agency about the dead sea turtle without a head that you saw washed ashore near your home on Tuesday, January 19th. We very much appreciate your report of this incident.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands (and elsewhere throughout the United States) are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again thank you for contacting us.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:ey
cc: Balazs
HL

Resent
1/19/88

HONOLULU LABORATORY
Southwest Fisheries Center
2570 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822-2396

September 4, 1987

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. George Teramoto
84-514 Makaha Valley Road
Waianae, HI 96792

Dear Mr. Teramoto:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the metal tag and other important information you recently supplied our agency concerning the two turtles found dead at Makua. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

As you know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

cc: Gene Witham, NMFS Law Enforcement
Balazs
HL

Dear U.M.F.S.,

I am doing
a report on the Galapagos
tortise. I was wondering if
you could give me any information
or pictures of it. My name is
Kim Bielefeld. My address is
437 Baldwin rd.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

Thank you,
Kim
Bielefeld

January 26, 1988

F/SWC2:GHB

Kim Bielefeld
437 Baldwin Rd.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

Dear Kim Bielefeld:

Thank you for your recent letter asking for information or pictures on the Galapagos tortoise. I am sorry to inform you that our agency is not involved with land turtles such as the Galapagos tortoise. We are responsible for the research and protection of endangered sea turtles--turtles that occur in the ocean. I recommend that you telephone the Education Department at the Honolulu Zoo (922-2985) to find out what information they may have available on tortoises. I wish you success in preparing your report.

I have enclosed several articles about sea turtles which you and your school class may find interesting.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

GHB:ey
cc: Balazs ✓
HL

January 22, 1988

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Hank Roberts
P.O. Box 793
Paia, Maui, HI 96779

Dear Mr. Roberts:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the important part you played in helping our agency and the State of Hawaii rescue the injured green sea turtle found at Paia on January 19th. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter. The turtle is now being cared for in captivity here at our research laboratory. However, it continues to be severely disoriented due apparently to the puncture wounds in its head. We are not optimistic about the turtle's survival.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands (and elsewhere throughout the United States) are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

GHB:ey

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

cc: Mr. S. Hau, Division of Aquatic Resources, Maui
Mr. P. Kawamoto, Division of Aquatic Resources, Honolulu

Balazs
HL

FORM CD-14 (2-76) Prescr. by DAO 214-2 TRANSMITTAL SLIP		U.S. DEPT. OF COMM.	DATE 2/21
TO: GWB		REF. NO. OR ROOM, BLDG.	
FROM: WGG		REF. NO. OR ROOM, BLDG.	
ACTION			
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTE AND FILE		<input type="checkbox"/> PER OUR CONVERSATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTE AND RETURN TO ME		<input type="checkbox"/> PER YOUR REQUEST	
<input type="checkbox"/> RETURN WITH MORE DETAILS		<input type="checkbox"/> FOR YOUR APPROVAL	
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTE AND SEE ME ABOUT THIS		<input type="checkbox"/> FOR YOUR INFORMATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> PLEASE ANSWER		<input type="checkbox"/> FOR YOUR COMMENTS	
<input type="checkbox"/> PREPARE REPLY FOR MY SIGNATURE		<input type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION		<input type="checkbox"/> INVESTIGATE AND REPORT	

COMMENTS:

GWB generated this after I showed him the WPPol-Harbold letter - This should be GWB → Nitta ? or ? *



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
 Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
 2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

July 21, 1988

F/SWC2

U66
GHB

MEMORANDUM FOR: F/SWR1 - Eugene T. Nitta

THROUGH: F/SWFC2 - William G. Gilmartin
 F/SWFC2 - George W. Boehlert

FROM: F/SWC2 - George H. Balazs

SUBJECT: Mr. Harbold's letter concerning impacts to turtles at Maunalua Bay

Although it wasn't mentioned in your response to Mr. Harbold, I want to call your attention to the fact that HL scientists have conducted a preliminary assessment of turtles and habitat at the site in question. Our results and the status of known historical knowledge are reported on p. 28-29 of Technical Memorandum SWFC-71. A total of 12 potentially important sites were examined during that particular study. However, only three (Kawela Bay, Palaaau, and Kahului Bay) could be examined in depth due to limitations in time, funding, and personnel.

My feeling is why bother? Tell him in the hall or call him up. If the memo is to chastise Gene, I don't see any benefit. I only see preparation of memos with minimal info to the "guys next door" as taking valuable time for George & our secretarial staff

CB

Geo
 Looks like we're getting back to the "informal" approach!
 WSL



June 22, 1988

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Leslie Tanabe
1619 Bernice Street
Honolulu, HI 96817

Dear Mr. Tanabe:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the part you recently played in aiding the injured turtle with a fish hook embedded deep in its front flipper. We very much appreciate your assistance in this matter. The hook was successfully removed and the turtle has now been returned to the wild in good condition.

As you may know, all sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands (and elsewhere throughout the United States) are listed and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and wildlife laws of the State of Hawaii. The National Marine Fisheries Service is charged with the responsibility of conducting research that will aid in the recovery of sea turtle populations, and their eventual return to former levels of abundance. I have enclosed several articles about our work, as well as general information about sea turtles, which you may find interesting. If you have any questions, or items of special concern that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at 943-1240 or 943-1221.

Again many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

cc: Jerry Crow - Waikiki Aquarium

GHB:gr

bcc: GHB ✓
HL

May 20, 1986

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Craig Nakamura
47-895 Kam Hwy
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Dear Craig,

I am writing to thank you for taking the time to report the dead green sea turtle, Chelonia mydas, that washed up in front of your house on Saturday, May 17th. As the principal agency responsible for sea turtles, we appreciated having the opportunity to examine this specimen for possible disease, evidence of poaching, and other important factors. Unfortunately, the carcass was considerably decomposed, making it impossible for any sort of meaningful internal autopsy to be conducted. Based on our external examination, there were no clues as to the cause of death. Nevertheless, it is important for us to document this mortality, especially since it involved a newly matured female (curved carapace length 89.5 cm) capable of migrating to breed at French Frigate Shoals.

I also appreciated hearing your comments on the increase in turtles with tumors seen in your area of Kaneohe Bay. We have received similar reports during recent years. I have enclosed a short paper summarizing this subject which I presented at a sea turtle workshop held in Georgia 2 months ago. Several other articles on sea turtles are also being sent for your information.

Again, many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

cc: Gene Witham
WPPD
NOAH PERELO

cc: Balazs
HL

Mail Buoy

AUGUST 1991
HAWAII FISHING NEWS



You state that a better course of action would have been to ban inshore set nets in the area frequented by the seal. This is a matter of State law, and if your suggested action were possible, it would likely take longer than the period of weaning and learning to forage by the young seal. Additionally, the large area that would have been explored by the pup would require this ban to cover an extensive area. During the 45 days after the seal was born, many NMFS staff and volunteers remained on the beach around the clock, monitoring the mother-pup pair; they observed incidents in which net fishermen insisted on trying to fish within the small enclosed area cordoned off to prevent interactions with people and dogs. Monk seals are particularly sensitive to human disturbance—whether it is well-intentioned or malicious.

Finally, we do not know that monk seals are beginning to reinhabit the main Hawaiian Islands. Certainly a comparison of beach counts today with those of 40 years ago suggests that the remote breeding sites are not becoming overcrowded. Still, the birth on O'ahu and the two births on Kaua'i in recent years are unprecedented. If at all possible, we would prefer to leave these seals in the main islands, and in fact, the two pups born on Kaua'i were left there. However, with the high population density and gamut of marine activities around O'ahu, we felt it best for this pup to be moved to Kure, where she can ultimately contribute to the recovery of the population.

Sincerely,
George W. Boehlert
Director, Honolulu Laboratory

Dear Chuck,

Thank you for publishing the text of NOAA's press release on moving the Hawaiian monk seal pup from O'ahu to Kure Atoll in your "Enough's Enough" section (HFN July 1991). Your accompanying editorial, however, was somewhat harsh. It alleges "seal-napping, harassment and cruelty" by the National Marine Fisheries Service and contains errors to which I would like to respond.

We did not "... separate the seal family before the mother had an opportunity to teach her young pup to feed..." As stated in the press release, the mother left after nursing the pup for 45 days. This is the normal pattern; Hawaiian monk seal pups are not taught to feed by their mothers and instead must learn to feed by themselves, a process which takes months. During this learning process, pups extensively explore inshore reef areas, a behavior that makes them particularly susceptible to entanglement in set nets and debris. Deaths from entanglement have even been observed in the seal populations of the pristine Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Your supposition that the pup was "probably terrified and drugged" during its airlift is similarly incorrect. We did not administer drugs to the seal, which in fact slept during most of the U.S. Coast Guard flight to Kure.

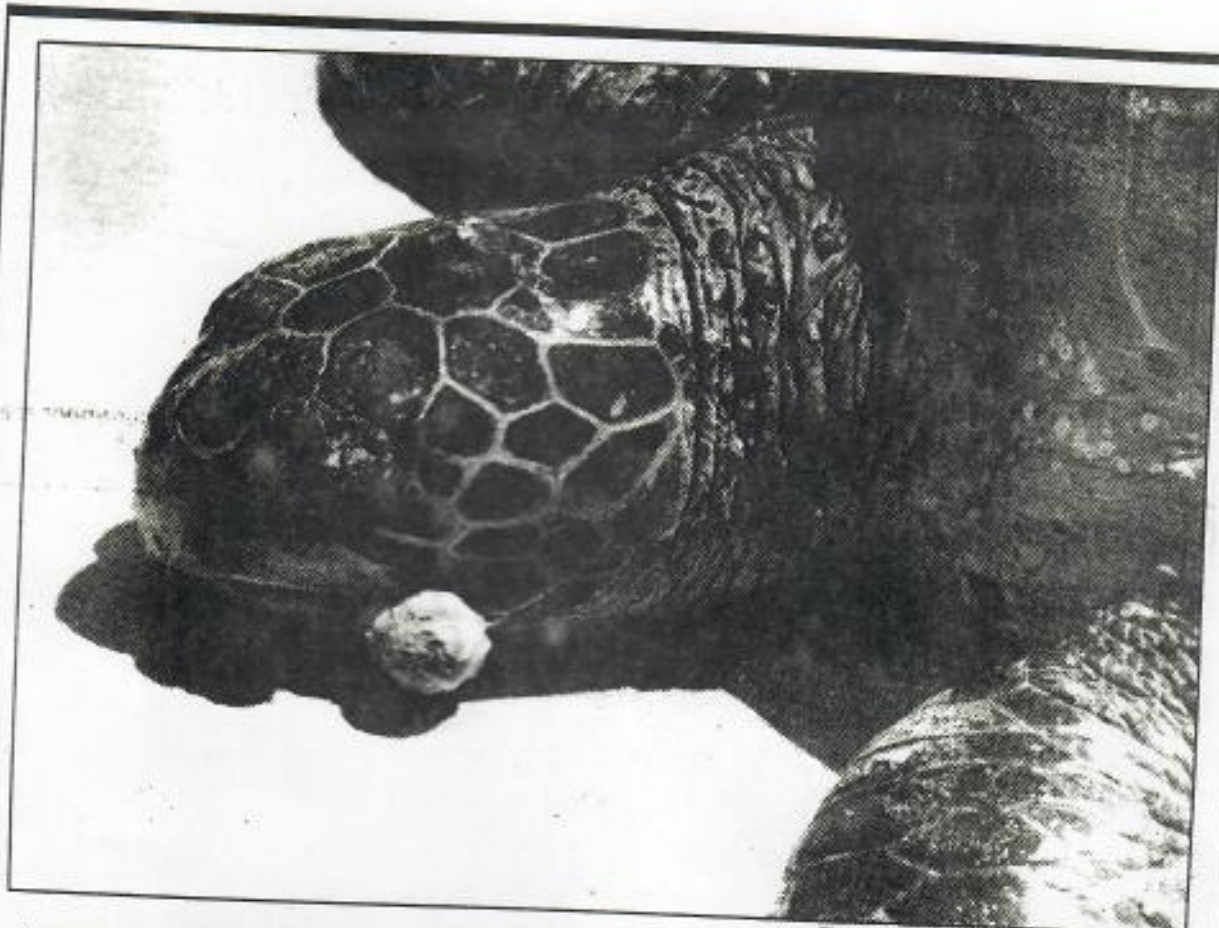
Editor's Response:

Differences of opinion create a learning environment. In your letter citing my supposition as being incorrect about the "probable" drugging of the baby monk seal, I'd like to point out my use of the word "probably." As it is defined in Webster's, probably means "based on evidence which inclines the mind to believe but leaves some room for doubt." Checking further with those involved in preparing monk seals for transport we were told the following: baby monks are not tranquilized for the simple reason they are too frightened to move about in the shipping cage. On the other hand, our source advised us that adult monk seals are sedated with drugs because they go nuts during the ordeal of transport in cages. Your response implies that the baby monk seal just kicked back and enjoyed the trip between snoozes. I am still "inclined" to believe transportation and relocation are stressful experiences.

Of additional interest, since the removal of the baby monk seal, the police and DLNR have been inundated with calls from La'ie on the North Shore to 'Ewa Beach (nearly 50 miles of coastline) reporting sightings of a monk seal (presumably the mother seal) poking its head out of the inshore waters, searching the coastline and possibly looking for her young pup. Just maybe there's an attachment or bonding between the two you are not aware of.

While on the subject of transporting mammals on the endangered species list, how about shipping a few thousand green sea turtles to less populated areas? The green sea turtles have repopulated the main islands to the point where they are now in plague proportions in many areas. It's not unusual to see 30 or more crowding the shallows of beaches on O'ahu, Lana'i and Moloka'i. It has been reported that their excrement has polluted sandy beaches. Plus, they are devouring quantities of limu and tako, two of their food sources. It appears that the green sea turtle is no longer endangered in the main islands, and in fact has, under the protective provisions of the law, reached nuisance proportions. Perhaps the recent reports of sick and dying turtles infected with ugly tumors are an indication of overcrowding or nature taking its course to balance an explosive population in a fragile ecosystem subject to the meddling of man.

... Chuck



The Maui News / MATTHEW THAYER photo

A gray tumor hangs out of the mouth of a 60-pound green sea turtle that was pulled to shore by concerned residents after it was spotted

floating in shallow waters off Baldwin Beach. The turtle died yesterday before researchers could ship it to Oahu for care.

Sea turtle with tumor dies

Animal washes ashore; affliction a growing problem

PAIA — A green sea turtle that washed onto Baldwin Park Beach with tumors hanging from its mouth died yesterday before researchers were able to ship it to Oahu for care.

Brooks Tamaye, a state Department of Land and Natural Resources information specialist, said the turtle probably died because it was unable to eat. The turtle, estimated to weigh about 75 pounds, looked emaciated, he said. It also was nicked up apparently from hitting the rocks.

Had it lived, the turtle would have been sent to the National Ma-

rine Fisheries Service lab on Oahu for further study, Tamaye said.

Tumorous green sea turtles are a growing, worldwide phenomenon that has baffled scientists for a decade.

"It's an increasing problem that is killing a lot of animals around the main islands," said Bill Gilmartin, leader of the Marine Mammals and Endangered Species Program of the National Marine Fisheries Services.

The green sea turtle is on the national list of endangered species.

Gilmartin said marine scientists are working vigorously on the tumor problem. A conference was held on the topic in December in Honolulu, and scientists established a two-year plan of attack in search of an answer.

One of the main suspected caus-

es is a virus. But scientists don't know how the turtles get it, if indeed that is the problem. An experiment is being conducted in Florida — mixing tumorous and non-tumorous turtles — in an effort to determine how communicable the phenomenon is.

Gilmartin said tumorous turtles were rarely seen 30 years ago, but the phenomenon mushroomed into a significant problem in the 1980s.

Tumors often are found on the eyes or flippers and sometimes on the mouth, he said. They often prevent the turtles from eating, and the result is they starve to death.

Tamaye said it wasn't the first tumorous turtle he has seen in Maui waters. "There has been a number of them," he said. "I wouldn't say it's common but we're finding more and more turtles."