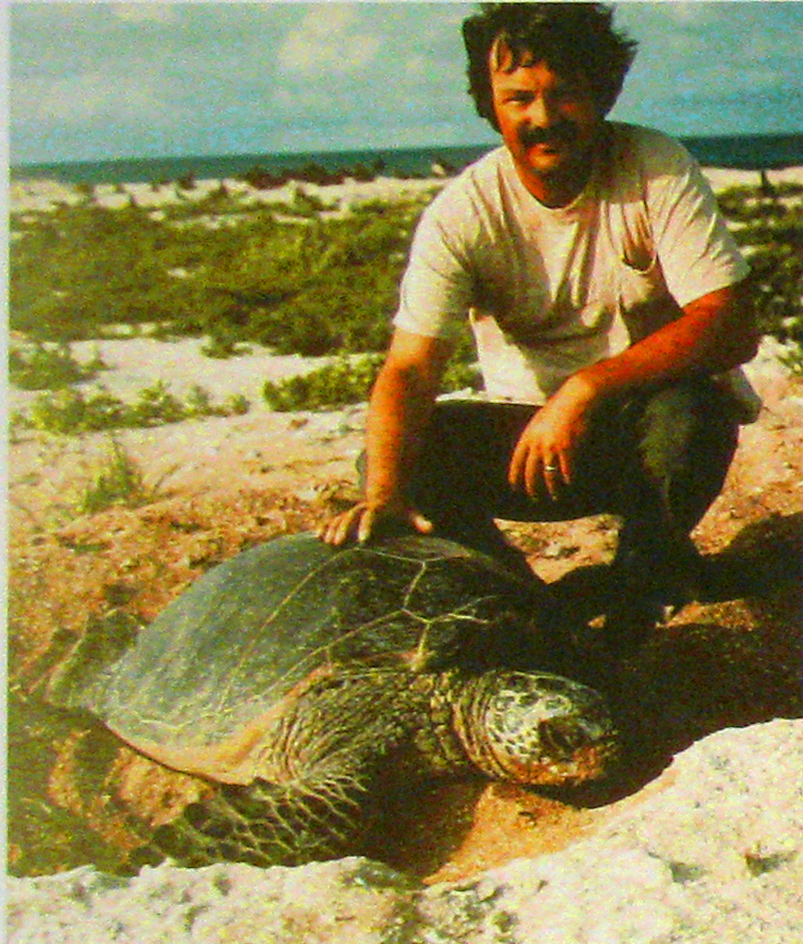


A Life's Work

NMFS Honolulu Laboratory Nominee

GEORGE BALAZS



Balazs with a nesting green turtle at French Frigate Shoals in 1974.

George Balazs, head of the NMFS Marine Turtle Research Program in Honolulu, has devoted his career to Hawai'i's green turtles. Over the past 27 years, he has tagged and tracked the life histories of nearly 6,000 of these marine reptiles in Hawai'i. Balazs received bachelor's and master's degrees in animal sciences from the University of Hawai'i.

Balazs efforts include:

- Gathered data by tagging, measuring, weighing and examining 3,900 turtles in coastal areas, adding to his computerized database of 2,000 nesting females tagged at French Frigate Shoals.
- Convinced Hawaii state lawmakers to outlaw the sale of green turtles for commercial use in 1974 through his data collected of turtles at nesting grounds on East Island.
- Discovered, by attaching radio transmitters to turtles departing from their nesting beaches in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands, that marine turtles navigate hundreds of miles back to feeding areas near the main Hawaiian Islands.
- Spearheaded research programs to discover the epidemiology, etiology and pathology of the deadly disease called fibropapillomatosis which causes life-threatening tumors on the eyes, neck, flippers, mouths and internal organs of marine turtles.
- Organized collaboration between the Honolulu Laboratory, SeeMore Wildlife Systems, and the Hawai'i Preparatory Academy for the first-ever SeaTurtleCams, portable cameras installed for remote monitoring and research of basking green turtles, on the Kona coast of Hawai'i. Using radio links, real-time streaming video is made available via the Internet on the SeeMore Wildlife website.
- Formed partnerships with neighbor island organizations to develop turtle stranding response networks on Maui and the Big Island.
- Participated in the design development of satellite transmitters to be used on sea turtles.

The Laboratory is very proud and thankful to have a person as dedicated, capable and energetic as George Balazs on our staff. We're quite certain Hawai'i's turtles feel the same way, too.



Balazs assisting Dr. Saif Al-Ghais in 1998 with satellite tracking of hawksbill turtles in the Arabian Gulf.