

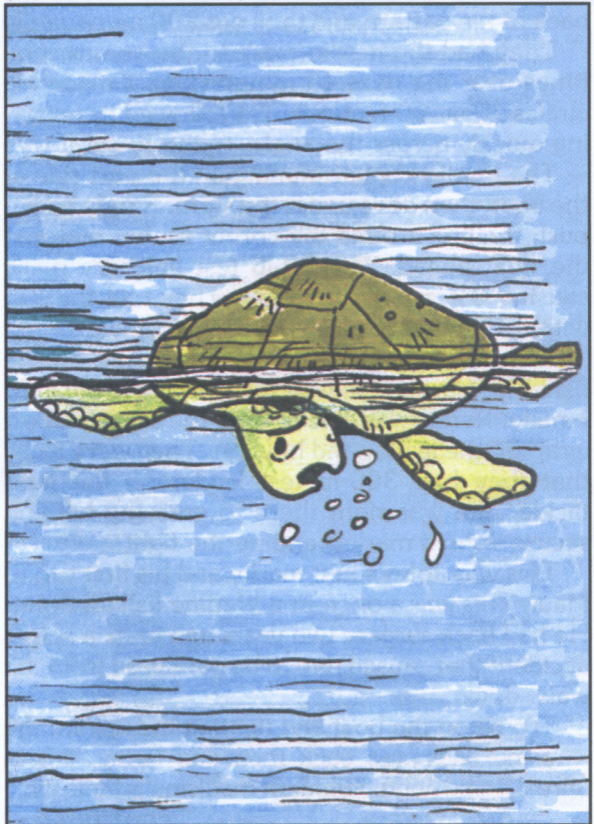
Civic Clubs Petition for Green Sea Turtle Delisting



President Stroud, Kitty Simonds (president of the Maunaloa Hawaiian Civic Club) and Charles Kaaia (of the Maunaloa Hawaiian Civic Club) attended the signing.

■ President Soulee Stroud of the **Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs (AOHCC)** petitioned the secretaries of Commerce and the Interior to classify the Hawaiian green sea turtle, or *honu*, as a discrete population segment (DPS) and then remove it from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) list.

The green sea turtle has been on the ESA list since 1978. The species has been considered threatened throughout its range, except for Florida and the Pacific coast of Mexico where breeding populations are listed as endangered.



Petition for Green Sea Turtle Delisting

by Soulee Stroud

A DPS is the smallest division of a species permitted to be protected under the ESA. All Hawaiian green sea turtles nest in the Hawai'i archipelago, the majority in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Tagging studies show that the adults remain near the Hawaiian islands.

The most recent green turtle review by the **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)** and the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)** recommended an analysis be conducted to determine the application of the DPS policy to the green turtle. If the population is determined to be a DPS and then delisted, the species can be managed by the state of Hawai'i rather than the federal government.

"This would be wonderful," said Soulee, "to bring the management of this important cultural animal back to the people of Hawai'i." The AOHCC has discussed the future management of the Hawaiian green sea turtle at its annual conferences since 2007. In November of last year, the AOHCC passed a resolution to pursue the DPS status and delisting.

The nesting population of the Hawaiian green sea turtle has been increasing steadily at a rate of 5.7 percent per year since the 1970s, and the population is estimated to be over 80 percent of pre-exploitation levels in the early 1940s.

"We should celebrate the recovery of this species, one of only about 20 ESA success stories," noted Kitty Simonds, president of the Maunaloa Hawaiian Civic Club. Among other delisted species are the bald eagle, brown pelican, American alligator, grey whale, Virginia northern flying squirrel and peregrine falcon.

The AOHCC petition reviews the biology, ecology, natural history and status of the Hawaiian green turtle population. Results from over 38 years of intensive research indicate that this stock satisfies criteria to be designated a DPS. The petition addresses the factors for delisting a species and describes the best available science and most current information to show that the population, once designated as a DPS, should be delisted under the ESA. It can be downloaded at <http://www.aohcc.org>.

... Soulee

About The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs

Founded by Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalani'ana'ole in 1918, the AOHCC is a confederation of 60 Hawaiian Civic Clubs located in Hawai'i and the continental United States. For more information about the AOHCC, visit www.aohcc.org.

