

Itbayat, Batanes 1002
Philippines
October 10, 1985

The Hibb University
Hawaii, 96744


Gentlemen:

I am pleased to inform you that we caught a sea male
turtle last October 6, 1985. It has a ring in one of its front
feathers and it reads as follows:

Write Hibb University
Hawaii, 96744
3385

If you are interested to further information, I am willing
to go for further details. Regards.

Very respectfully,



NEO VILLA

6/7 & 6/13 & 6/15/84 NESTING ON EAST IS. FFS
Tagged by me, 6/7 3385 LFL S-93.6cm
- No eggs confirmed - ∴ ONLY ONE TAG APPLIED
NOT SEEN AGAIN AFTER 6/15.

FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS TO

ITBAYAT IS. - AT LEAST 4600 MILES
(7350 km)

FUKIEN

Fu-chou

YANGTUNG

Shan-t'ung

CHOU Canton
Chu Chiang (Canton R.)

HONG KONG
Shan-ch'uan Shan

SIA
Helen Shl

REEFS
Lincoln I
Scarborough Shl

HINA SEA

N Danger
Lys Shl
West York I

DANGEROUS GROUND
The area enclosed by the dotted line has not been surveyed on R's

Investigator Shl

TAIWAN (FORMOSA)

LUZON

STRAIT

LUZON

MINDORO STR

MINDORO

SULU SEA

BASHI CHANNEL

BALINTANG CHANNEL

NO VARIATION

MINDORO STR

PANAY

NEGROS

BOHOL

SAKISHIMA GUNTO

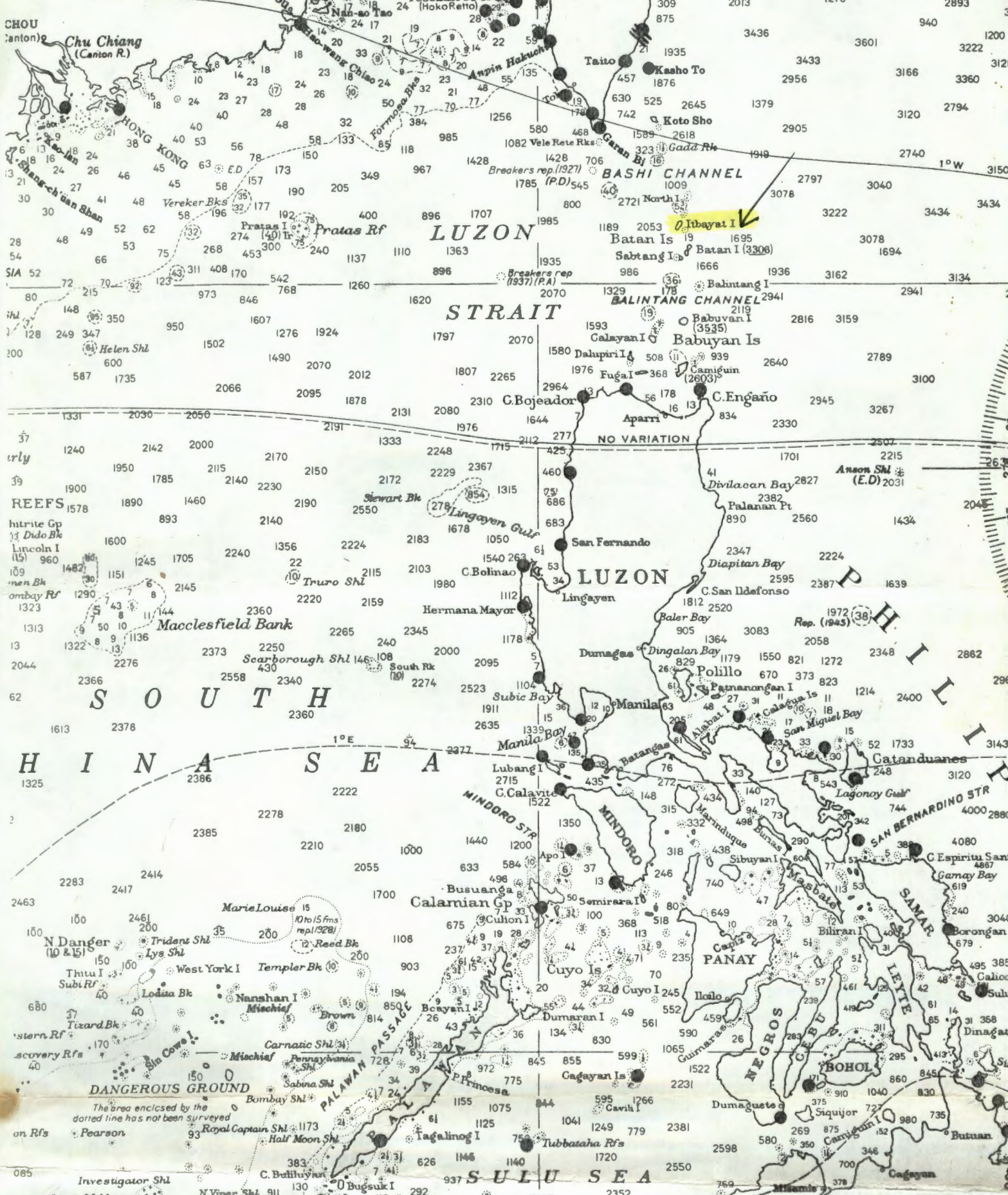
PHILIPPINE

SAN BERNARDINO STR

SAMAR

LEYTE

CEBU



November 15, 1985

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Neo Villa
Itbayat, Batanes 1002
Philippines

Dear Mr. Villa:

We were most pleased to read your letter dated October 10, 1985 which just arrived here yesterday. Thank you very much for taking the time to report the capture of one of our tagged sea turtles, number 3385. I tagged this animal at East Island in the French Frigate Shoals on June 7, 1984. French Frigate Shoals is located about 500 miles from Honolulu in the northwestern portion of the Hawaiian Archipelago. The area is a famous breeding ground for many kinds of seabirds, as well as the green sea turtle and the Hawaiian monk seal.

Your recovery of this tagged turtle represents the most distant report we have ever received since tagging started at French Frigate Shoals in the early 1960's. 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 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. Approximately how large was the turtle? An estimate of its weight, or the length of the shell, would be appreciated.
4. 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?
5. If the turtle was butchered and cleaned to be eaten, what kind of food material did you find in its stomach?

I am sorry that it has taken over a month for me to be able 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
P. O. Box 3830
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

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

bc: Balazs
HL

29 MAR 2004

Itbayat, Batanes 1002
Philippines
November 26, 1985

Mr. George H. Balazs
National Marine Fisheries Service
P. O. Box 3830
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

Dear Mr. Balazs:

This has reference to your letter dated November 15, 1985 which just arrived here yesterday. In compliance with your said letter, I hereby narrate the story of the said turtle.

On October 6, 1985, I go fishing in the Southwestern of Itbayat using my improvised spear with sling, I saw the said turtle eating sea weeds. As I go nearer to it, it does not mind me, so I just hold it. I am keeping its tag bearing number 3385.

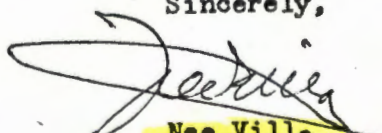
Answers of your questions:

1. I caught the turtle by hand.
2. Yes, the turtle is in good health when captured. It seem normal, but, as if it is weak, hungry and exhausted.
3. The width of the shell is 28 inches and the weight of the entire turtle is approximately 75 kilos.
4. It is feeding itself with sea weeds when captured. Turtles of this same kind regularly live in that area where I caught the said turtle. However, they could not go ashore in our place as it has no sand in the surroundings, unlike in the northern small islands whereon almost all are surrounded by sand. Anyway, the captured turtle is a male. During the month of June, July and August, female turtles usually go ashore and lay eggs in the northern islands, so, we go and hunt there.
5. Since turtles' meat is a special for us to eat, we butchered the said turtle and ate some of its meat in the stomach uncooked. We cooked some of it with simple ingredients.

Itbayat is the Northernmost inhabited island of the Philippines and it is often affected by strong typhoon. So, mailing is sometimes delayed. During fine weather, our only means of transportation is a motorized small wooden made vessel going to Basco, the capital of Batanes whereon regular flights of airplane is four times per week vice versa to Manila.

Writing you again, and advance Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,


Nestor Villa

December 22, 1985

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Neo Villa
Itbayat, Batanes 1002
Philippines

Dear Mr. Villa:

I very much appreciated hearing from you again about the tagged turtle you caught at your island of Itbayat. Thank you for answering my questions in such a careful manner.

As promised in my last letter, I am sending you a color poster showing the different kinds of sea turtles, as well as several publications you may find interesting. If the school on your island would also like to have educational materials on sea turtles, I would be pleased to send them at no cost. Do many people speak and write English on your island? What language is commonly used?

I have a few more questions about the tagged turtle which I hope you won't mind my asking.

1. How were you able to tell that the turtle was a male?
2. Has anyone else in your area ever caught a turtle with a tag?
3. How many turtles go ashore to lay eggs in the northern islands during the months of June, July, and August? How many turtles can you catch there in one day? Do you hunt both the male and the female turtles in the northern islands?
4. What is the name of the seaweed you found in the stomach of the tagged turtle? Is it a kind that the people of Itbayat regularly eat? If you have a small piece of the seaweed, perhaps you could dry it on paper and mail it to me with your next letter.

Again, thank you for your helpful letter. If there is any way I can be of assistance to you here in Hawaii, please do not hesitate to ask me. I send my best regards for the Christmas season and the New Year.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosures

cc: G. Balazs
HL