



Photo: Patrick Doyle



For more information,  
or to volunteer, contact:

**Mālama na Honu**  
P.O. Box 1078 • Haleiwa, HI 96712

A 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization

[www.malamanahonu.org](http://www.malamanahonu.org)

A Project Co-funded By  
HTA (Hawaii Tourism Authority) and NOAA Fisheries

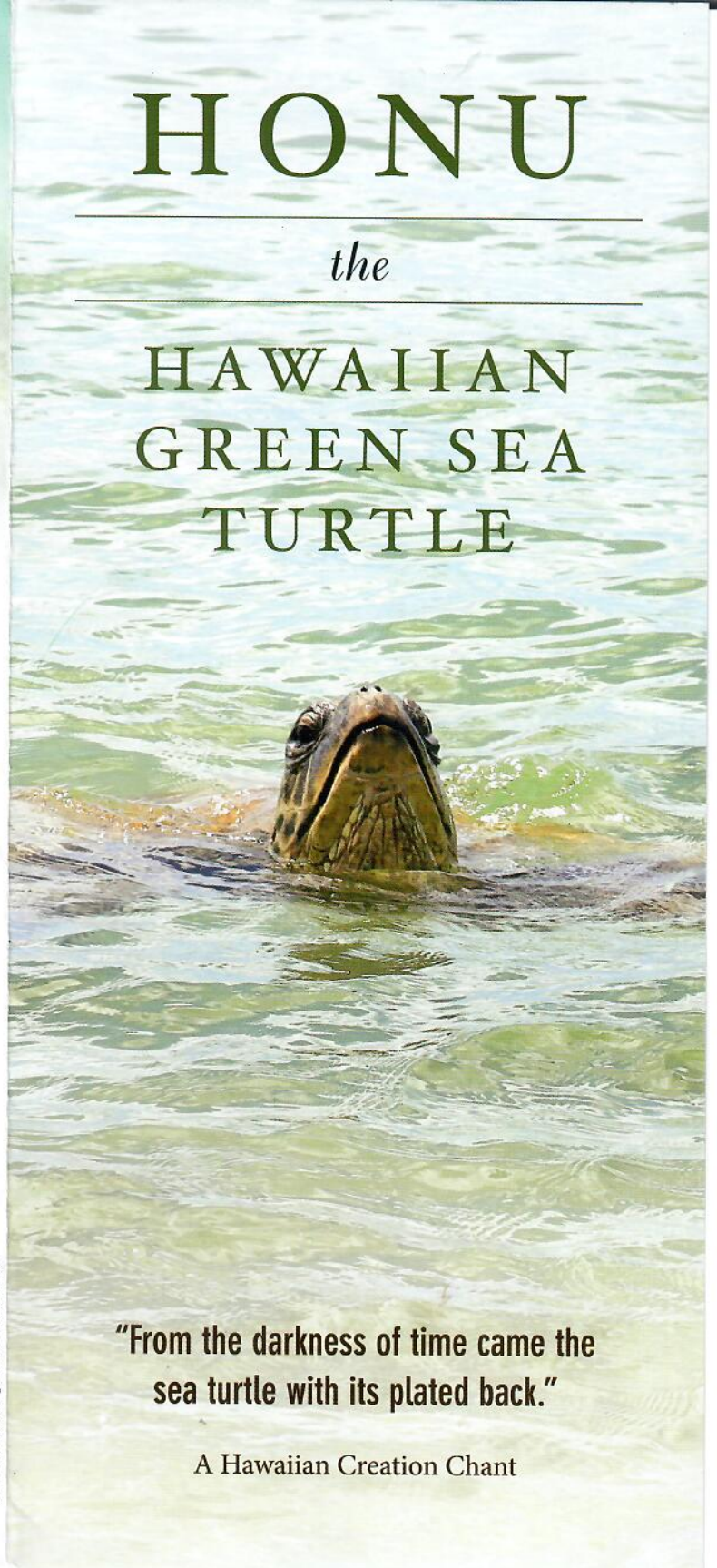


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# HONU

*the*

## HAWAIIAN GREEN SEA TURTLE



Cover Photo: Stephanie Thibaudeau

**"From the darkness of time came the  
sea turtle with its plated back."**

A Hawaiian Creation Chant



# Viewing *Honu* with Aloha

Photo: Patrick Doyle



**Sea turtles are protected by international, federal and state laws.**

Green sea turtles, known locally as *honu*, are part of the identity of the islands and hold a special place in the minds and hearts of the people of Hawaii. The species was nearly depleted during the 1960s, but the population is now on the road to recovery.

In late 1990s, *honu* began basking on Hawaii beaches, providing increased wildlife viewing opportunities.

Please give basking *honu* space. They do not need a helping hand from humans. Never try to push a sea turtle back into the water or pour water on it. Allow them a clear path and do not block their access to land or water.

Feeding or attempting to interact with sea turtles can habituate them to humans, cause stress, and adversely alter their behavior and long-term survival.

**Please treat turtles respectfully...  
observe, but do not disturb.**

## **TO HELP PROTECT THE *HONU*: Follow NOAA responsible viewing guidelines:**

Photo: Stephanie Thibaudreau



- Do not crowd, touch, chase, or pursue a turtle. Six feet (2 m) is a respectful distance.
- Do not feed sea turtles.
- Watch for turtles while boating or jet skiing.
- Dispose of trash properly, and pick up any you find in the water or on the beach, especially fishing line.
- Do not purchase items made of turtle shell.

**IF YOU ENCOUNTER A SICK OR INJURED TURTLE, CALL:  
NOAA FISHERIES STRANDING HOTLINE 808-983-5730**

**725**





Photo: Patrick Doyle

## THREATS TO SEA TURTLES

*Honu*, one of earth's oldest creatures, are an iconic species of the Pacific with high cultural, traditional, and often spiritual significance. Yet, the population in Hawaii is threatened by:







-  Recreational fishing line and gear entanglement
-  Disease
-  Collisions with recreational boats and jet skis
-  Continued illegal harvest of meat and shell
-  Reef degradation and coastal development
-  Marine debris and pollution



Photo: NOAA/MTRP



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## THE HONU



Is not green on the outside, but gets its name from the color of its internal body fat, tinted green from its primarily vegetarian diet.



Lives to be about 60–70 years old.



Can grow to more than 36 inches (90 cm) long and weigh up to 350 lb. (159 kg).



Can hold its breath about 2-5 hours while resting, but must breathe air every 5 minutes when active.



Can dive up to 570 feet (174 m) during migrations, but typically is found at shallow depths 0–20 feet (< 5 m) during the day, diving to 35–50 feet (10–14 m) at night to rest.



Can swim in short bursts up to 20 mph (32 kph) when fleeing a potential predator.



Can reproduce for the first time between 25–40 years of age when they reach sexual maturity at approximately 30 inches (80 cm) in shell size.



Males develop a long tail that extends beyond the back flippers, while the female tail extends only to the end of her shell.



Migrates to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands over 1,000 miles (1609 km) round trip to mate and nest about every 2–5 years.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT HONU

[www.malamanahonu.org](http://www.malamanahonu.org)

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/viewing.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/viewing.htm)

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/turtles.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/turtles.htm)

[www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd\\_green\\_sea\\_turtle.html](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd_green_sea_turtle.html)

[www.turtles.org](http://www.turtles.org)

[www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org)

