

George Balazs FY13 Annual Performance Review  
October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013

**Professional** – *Maintains and demonstrates technical competence and/or experience in areas of assigned responsibility. Produces scientific or technical products/activities that contribute to the achievement of the agency's mission. (40 pts)*

- Made prominent and competent advancements in all aspects of new data collection, mapping, and manuscript preparation involving international regional research with EOD and partners in New Caledonia and Japan for satellite tracking studies of loggerhead pelagic ecology to identify “hotspots” for bycatch reduction. Major 9/12 New Caledonia deployments resulting in voluminous significant pelagic tracking data. Collaboration with Australian researcher for new PhD dissertation analysis.
- Continued to promote, oversee, and achieve timely and accurate updating of all seven high-value MTRP long-term databases working closely with S. Brunson, W. Marks (<Feb.), D. Parker, D. Francke, and I. Nurzia-Humburg, E. Walker in concert with S. Murakawa and K. Van Houtan.
- Coauthored and published an important paper on humane euthanasia of end-point turtles found under remote field conditions where veterinary intervention isn't possible.
- Coauthored a paper submitted for journal publication entitled “The trachea of the juvenile leatherback: compressibility, bifurcation, and vascular lining to facilitate feeding, diving, and endothermy.”
- Coauthored a paper submitted for journal publication entitled “Nutritional analysis of seashore paspalum consumed by Hawaiian green turtles.”
- Coauthored a paper published in J. Exp. Marine Biology entitled “Behavior of juvenile green turtles in a coastal neritic habitat.”
- Coauthored a paper published in J. Exp. Marine Biology entitled “Insights on the demography of cryptic nesting by green turtles in the Main Hawaiian Islands from genetic relatedness analysis.”
- Coauthored a paper published in PLOS One entitled “The genome of the chelonid herpesvirus 5 harbors atypical genes.”
- Coauthored a paper published in Endangered Species Research entitled “Green turtle population structure in the Pacific: new insights from SNP's and microsatellites.”
- Coauthored a paper published in PLOS One entitled “A model of loggerhead sea turtle habitat and movement in the oceanic North Pacific.”

- Coauthored a paper published in Health and Disease entitled “Tumors in sea turtles: the insidious menace of fibropapillomatosis.”
- Coauthored the preparation of a paper submitted for Center approval entitled “Neurotoxin activity in marine turtle tissues from the Hawaiian Islands.”
- Presented, as first author, 2 papers and, as coauthor, 3 papers at the Baltimore International Sea Turtle Symposium in February 2013. Published in Symposium Proceedings.
- Contributed effort and expertise to successfully interact and collaborate with MTAP K. Van Houtan and T. Todd Jones to develop additional science-sound ideas for research projects and sample availability. Assisted in revision as coauthor of Van Houtan et. al. green turtle age at first reproduction manuscript now submitted to Pacific Science.
- Demonstrated competence in the safe and efficient conduction of field studies (Oahu and the Big Island) and necropsies of green turtles to build upon long term PIFSC databases and to enhance professional collaborations with the National Institute of Standards and Technology using their analytical resources at no cost to the PIFSC.
- Worked as a coauthor with Denise Parker and K. Van Houtan to produce a manuscript on the GPS tracking of a post-nesting hawksbill for journal submission during 9/13.
- Actively participated and contributed as a member of the Global Green Turtle Status Review Team by attending 2 3-day meetings in San Diego and 16 2+-hour conference call sessions. Devoted substantial time, talent and effort.
- Continued participation through conference calls and other communications as the active and engaged PIFSC science representative to the China/USA Bilateral Living Marine Resources Panel Meetings.
- Collaborated with the SWFSC Jeffrey Seminoff and JIMAR John Wang under the Living Marine Resources Panel Meeting to prepare a preliminary funding proposal to convene a turtle foraging ecology and health assessment workshop in Guangdong, China. This proposal was ratified by NOAA Headquarters and officials of the Peoples Republic of China.
- Successfully completed a PSD Center 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Milestone involving multiple components on identifying strategies to expand and strengthen international sea turtle research partnerships in the East Asia Pacific Region. Harmoniously involved a broad array of Center scientists.
- Collaborated with City University of Hong Kong professors to academically promote and enhance PhD student’s dissertation research on China sea turtles.

- Created a collaborative PhD dissertation research project on diet prey via Dr. Pamela Plotkins (Director of Sea Grant Texas A & M) to utilize gastro-intestinal tract contents from 80 long-line bycatch turtles collected and archived by MTRP over the past 15 years.
- Worked in creative collaboration with Dr. Kimberly Reich, Texas A & M, to facilitate parasite dissertation research including specimens for former MTRP Hollings Scholar Charlayna Cammarata.
- Published a coauthored major paper with the SWFSC entitled "Insights on the demography of cryptic nesting by green turtles in the main Hawaiian Islands from genetic relatedness analysis" in J. Exper. Marine Biology and Ecology.
- Continued formulating research plans with John Wang, Denise Parker, and the Sea Turtle Association of Japan for collaborative analysis and publication of loggerhead tracking data.
- With Denise Parker, updated and authored MTRP's calendar year 2012 "Map guide of marine turtle nesting and basking in the Hawaiian Islands."
- Facilitated the outstanding progress of PhD student Susie Hilber- Piacenza, a Sea Grant Population Dynamic Fellow of Oregon State University.

**Administration and Teamwork** – *Plans, organizes and executes work logically. Work is accurate, complete and timely. Consistently develops and sustains cooperative working relationships. Willingly participates in group activities. Communicates regularly with team members, supports team initiatives, and demonstrates respect for team members. (30 pts.)*

- Vigorously promoted a safe and healthy work environment as the top priority for all MTRP and collaborative PSD/ PIFSC activities.
- As MTRP leader, continued to provide comprehensive time, expertise, and motivation-by-example to advance the harmonious teamwork efforts of PSD-MTRP in unison with MTAP in making science and service accomplishments to promote the Center's research missions.
- Continued to promote training and skills building opportunities to further integrate S. Brunson into leadership roles, including serving as MTRP Acting Leader on 10 occasions of 4 days or more, and oversight and performance plan responsibilities of three JIMAR Biological Technicians, and other professionally advanced actions. Felt pride in her earned accomplishment of Employee of the Year.
- For the short term, successfully reprogrammed personnel using limited funds to facilitate S. Murakawa's 100% departure 6-months (October-March) from MTRP in the absence of backfill.

- Actively participated in and oversaw the continued sorting, selective disposal, cleaning, and transfer of MTRP gear items and high-value specimen collections from Annex 2 Dole Street to Building 130 Ford Island, and from offices 109 and 111. Arranged for a major collaborative transfer of bone specimens to Bishop Museum.
- Successfully orchestrated, along with S. Brunson, JIMAR cash Performance Awards for the highly deserving outstanding work of W. Marks, D. Francke, and I. Nurzia-Humburg.
- Encouraged and supported W. Marks to present a paper at the December 2012 Sea Turtle Stranding and Rehabilitation Workshop in Florida.
- Nominated Devon Francke for advancement to the position of JIMAR Supervisor.
- Successfully recruited the return of JIMAR Irene Nurzia-Humburg to MTRP employment at a crucial time in database entry and software advancement.
- Participated in update training to conduct JIMAR/ RCUH Performance Evaluations.
- Facilitated and assisted Irene Nurzia-Humburg in the on-going preparation of a NOAA TM Report entitled “Forty years of research: Recovery records of green turtles observed or originally tagged at French Frigate Shoals, NWHI, 1973-2012.
- Created a high-profile educational announcement celebrating the 808<sup>th</sup> turtle rescued and rehabilitated by PSD since 1990.
- Partnered with Irene Nurzia-Humburg and Shandell Brunson in achieving a 2013 turtle nesting and basking activity survey of the NWHI (including a detailed final report) to offset inability to systematically monitor East Island due to storm destruction of FWS Tern facility.
- Actively pursued and promoted among staff all aspects of engagement in support of the move to Ford Island.
- Interacted with high professionalism and respect in all interactions with staff and partners.

**Advice/Service** – *Delivers high quality products and services to external and internal customers in accordance with agreed upon time schedules. Initiates and responds to suggestions for improving service. Anticipates and meets the needs of clients and is committed to continuous improvement of services (30 pts).*

- Reviewed 4 manuscripts for the editors of major journals.
- Reviewed two research permit applications at the request of the NMFS Permit Office.

- When called upon, by Division Chief and Center Director, regularly served as a timely reliable source of science data, advice, and promotion of the PIFSC as an outstanding research entity to a broad array of constituents locally, to NMFS Headquarters, and to the global community.
- Served as a Board of Director of the prestigious science-based International Sea Turtle Society (year 1.5 of a 5 year term) and participated in the August 2013 Board meeting no-cost travel in West Virginia.
- Participated with Irene Nurzia-Humburg in meetings with the Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss, formulate, and advise future courses of action for Tern Island's status, turtle research, and storm-damaged infrastructure.
- Spent ~8 hours of focused meeting time with Division Chief on 5 occasions. (4 in person, 1 by phone) providing reliable historic and current programmatic information, correcting misinformation, and supplying reasoned options, advice, and homework assignment results for his consideration. Spent in excess of 30 hours of thinking and deliberation time outside of work hours, in addition to working time, related to these meetings.
- Wrote a letter of strong recommendation for a JIMAR part-time student stranding response employee in support of an application for the Regents and Presidential Scholarship of the UH.
- Served as the Deputy Co-Chair for the Oceania Region of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialists Group.
- Provided periodic science and research advice to the WPRFMC as a member of their Sea Turtle Advisory Committee. Accepted invitation to serve on the Council's new Protected Species Committee ≥ September 2013.
- Prepared Quarterly Reports for the WPRFMC.