



## An International Affair

HPA Students Assist with Project in Nagoya, Japan

Story and Photos > Phyllis Kanekuni

# 名古屋

**25** juvenile loggerhead turtles carrying satellite tags—miniature satellite beacons—are traveling in the North Pacific Ocean and providing information to scientists about their movements thanks to the work of HPA's Sea Turtle Research Program.

In late March, a team of Upper School students—Mari Asai, Reina Morise, Meimei Nakahara, and Rebecca Wong—led by Marc Rice, traveled to Nagoya, Japan to assist in preparing the 18-month-old loggerhead turtles for release in the Kuroshio Current. Under the direction of Rice and George Balazs, leader, Marine Turtle Research Program, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, the students worked diligently for three solid days—March 27-29—at the Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium (PNPA) attaching wildlife computer SPOT 5 satellite tags to the young loggerheads that were hatched and raised at the aquarium. These turtles are part of an ongoing study to determine oceanic migratory habits of loggerhead turtles using satellite telemetry.

"The data gathered from this study are important because the North Pacific Loggerhead population has been declining and loggerhead bycatch on longline boats might be reduced if loggerhead 'hotspots' can be identified," said Rice.

The PNPA, NOAA, and HPA have collaborated on this international effort since April 2003, when Balazs released the first seven juvenile loggerhead turtles outfitted with satellite tags. This current deployment marks the seventh release of loggerhead turtles, bringing the study total to 192 turtles. At Balazs' invitation, HPA students have been involved in the last five deployments.

"I'm very grateful for the considerable talents, expertise, dedication, and enthusiasm that Marc and the students brought to this project," said Balazs. "Everyone worked extremely hard to make sure our release was successful; the students brought good cheer to our work and it was a joy to be around them."

Preparing the turtles for satellite tag attachment involves many steps and close attention to detail. The students all brought with them much knowledge and previous experience working with turtles and knew exactly what needed to be done. Team members set up materials and equipment, recorded tag numbers, carefully removed the turtles from their holding tank and washed them, assigned identification numbers to the turtles, gently sanded each turtle's carapace, assisted in attaching tags to the carapace with polymer, removed the excess polymer, and assisted in securing the tags with fiberglass cloth and resin. Each turtle was weighed and measured and its tag tested prior to being placed in individual holding pens.



Top: The Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium is one of the city's gems. Bottom: Student team members assist George Balazs with a satellite tag attachment.

On March 30, students loaded the turtles on PNPA trucks and aquarium staff members took the animals to the Taiheiyo Ferry, *Ishikari*. Team members boarded the ferry later that afternoon for the project's final phase.

In biting cold at 7 a.m. on May 31, students and aquarium staff members brought the turtles outside to the ferry's back deck and readied them for a final farewell. At 8 a.m., the captain slowed the ferry so aquarium staff members could begin releasing the turtles into the Kuroshio Current. The students carefully placed two turtles in large baskets,

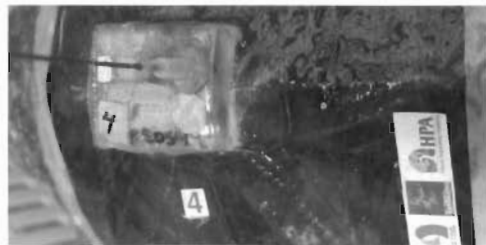
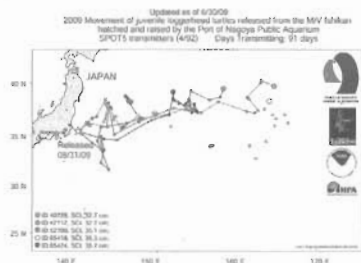
which were slowly lowered one at a time off the side of the ship into the water. Word about the turtles' release spread quickly around the ferry and a good-sized crowd of passengers gathered to witness the deployment.

By 8:30 a.m., all 25 turtles were successfully released and on their way to new adventures in the open ocean.

Satellite signals have been received from all 25 turtles (see latest tracking map), which are expected to transmit signals for the next six to eight months, assuming the tags stay secured and operational and assuming no predation; the tags eventually will slough off as the turtle grows. According to Rice, it still is very early to draw any conclusions from this deployment, however, information gathered from previous releases indicate that the turtles will probably move in an easterly direction from the release point and spend much of their time in the Central Pacific, north of Kure Atoll, where warm water from Japan meets the cooler water from the North Pacific and there is an abundance of food, such as jellyfish and other planktonic organisms.

"All of the staff and administrators at the Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium were very impressed with our students' work and knowledge," said Rice. "In addition, the students were excellent ambassadors when interacting with Japanese visitors and volunteers. I cannot stress enough, what a pleasure it was to work with these students. They were integral to the success of the project—from the tag attachment to the final release of the turtles." ■

*Editor's Note: Since 1987, HPA has had a close working relationship with NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service Pacific Islands Fisheries Center, in conducting turtle research and conservation activities. Under the supervision of Rice and Balazs, Middle and Upper School students have assisted with the safe capture, measuring, health assessment, and tagging of many hundreds of sea turtles at various Big Island sites. The work has grown over the years in scope, magnitude, and importance to overall species conservation. The Collaborative Sea Turtle Research Program has provided opportunities for students to travel and work throughout the Hawaiian Islands, as well as in Greece, Japan, Mexico, and New Caledonia. For more information visit [www.hpa.edu](http://www.hpa.edu) and click on the Turtle Tagging button.*



Clockwise from top left: Makoto Soichi (standing, center), director of the Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium, hosted a dinner for members of the PNP's Turtle Research Institute and the Hawai'i team to celebrate the successful release of the juvenile loggerhead turtles; On board the Taiheiyō Ferry, *Ishikari*: Student team members Meimei Nakahara (left) and Mari Asai bring two juvenile loggerhead turtles to a special basket that will carefully be lowered by aquarium staff into Kuroshio Current; Juvenile loggerhead turtle No. 4 with a completed satellite tag attachment; One of the current satellite tracking charts showing movements of five juvenile loggerhead turtles.

"This trip to Nagoya was very different from my previous trip several years ago. Besides the regular work at the aquarium, I enjoyed traveling and sight-seeing around Japan, especially Hiroshima. The trip aboard the ferry was very nice, especially seeing the little turtles go 'ker-plunk' into their new world. This trip definitely broadened my view in more ways than my previous trip." —Rebecca Wong

## Trains, Castles, and Sea Squirts

Story and Photos > Phyllis Kanekuni

**W**hen I was invited to accompany our Sea Turtle Research Program team to Nagoya for 10 days—March 25 to April 4—I jumped at the opportunity to witness firsthand the kind of learning our students are engaged in outside of the classroom, particularly on an international level.

Our student team was a rather international group, including two students from Japan, Mari Asai from Kyoto and Reina Morise from Kobe, who also served as our interpreters; one student from Hawai'i, Meimei Nakahara, and one student from Hong Kong, Rebecca Wong. This was an extremely experienced team, not only in working with turtles, but in traveling abroad. Everyone stayed on task during the project, yet along with team leaders Marc Rice and George Balazs, we would have been hard-pressed to find a more fun and amiable group.



L to r: Mari Asai, Rebecca Wong, Meimei Nakahara, and Marc Rice at the A-Bomb Dome in Hiroshima.

Nagoya is Japan's third largest city and the Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium (PNPA) is one of the city's gems. Our PNPA hosts, particularly Makoto Soichi, aquarium director, Tomomi "Tomi" Saito, section manager of sea turtle reproduction, along with all of the aquarium staff members, extended their warmest hospitality to us. Mrs. Miho Ito

CONTINUED ON P.39

even welcomed the young ladies and me with a Japanese tea ceremony and provided the group with many delicious Japanese snacks.

During breaks, we were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the aquarium and visited with the resident penguins. We also toured the public areas of this amazing facility and attended the dolphin show.

Our hosts' hospitality extended well beyond the aquarium. After the turtle release, we caught the bullet train from Sendai back to Nagoya and Mr. Saito and his colleague, Mr. Kobayashi, treated us to a sampling of specialty foods from Sendai, which included beef tongue jerkey, dried sea squirts, and green tea Kit Kat. Mr. Soichi also hosted a dinner for the aquarium staff and our group to celebrate the successful turtle deployment.

Speaking of food, we discovered and consumed many mouth-watering dishes in Japan, including the famous Nagoya chicken (especially the miso chicken katsu!), mochi pizza, green tea McFlurries from McDonald's, ramen, and curry. Sweets also topped the list and the students always shared their newest candy finds with the team. My own favorite sweet was the melon Fanta.

In the evenings, our group explored the nearby areas, including the outdoor shopping mall in Osu, where we also stopped at the Osu Kannon Temple. On one particularly dark and cold evening, we experienced "train mania" in a location I will not disclose for fear of attracting crowds of people to this site. It was quite a thrill to stand so close to the bullet trains as they whizzed by without warning on the other side of the security fence.



The Hawai'i team pictured with the O-Torii Gate, a symbol of Miyajima.

After the successful release of "our" turtles (because when you spend that much time with animals, you really become attached), we spent three days sightseeing and learning more about Japanese history and culture. We visited Nagoya Castle and Meijo Park, where the cherry blossoms were in bloom. We went to the deer park in Nara, where the deer "bow" for food, and toured the Todaiji Temple, the largest wooden structure in the world and home to the Great Buddha Hall.

	Lower School	Middle School	Upper School
August 14			All freshmen and new boarders arrive, noon on
August 16		All boarders arrive, noon on Experience HPA, 4-6 p.m.	
August 17	Open House, 8-10 a.m.	Open House, 8-10 a.m.	New student and parent orientation, 8 a.m. Returning boarders arrive, noon on
August 18	Classes begin, 7:55 a.m.	Classes begin, 7:50 a.m.	Assembly followed by all classes
September 7	Labor Day holiday		
September 14	'Ohana Association Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.		
September 21	Teacher professional development day (no classes)		
October 12	'Ohana Association Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.		
October 15-18		Parents Weekend	Parents Weekend
October 16	Open House, 8 a.m.-noon		
October 16-17		Parent Conferences (no classes on 10/16)	Parent Conferences (no classes on 10/16)
October 18	'Ohana Association's Pumpkin Patch, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Upper Campus		
October 19	Parents Weekend holiday		
November 9	'Ohana Association Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.		
November 25	Thanksgiving break begins, 12:15 p.m.	Thanksgiving break begins, 12:30 p.m.	Thanksgiving break begins, 12:20 p.m.
November 27-29			37th Annual Soccer Classic
November 29		Boarders return	Boarders return
November 30	Classes resume		
December 3-5			HPA Basketball Classic
December 7	'Ohana Association Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.		
December 11	Last day of school. Winter break begins, release time to be announced.		
December 14	'Ohana Association Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.		

# on campus

## From Aunty June's Kitchen... Mashed Sweet Potato

- 6 medium-sized sweet potato (your favorite)
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons grated ginger
- 5 oz. sweetened condensed milk

Boil or steam the sweet potato until soft. Mash potatoes (with skin). Add butter, honey, ginger, and sweetened condensed milk. Serves 4.

We also took the bullet train south and visited Hiroshima and Miyajima Island on a breathtakingly beautiful day. Miyajima Island has been designated as one of Japan's three most scenic places, along with Matsushima Bay near Sendai, and Amanohashidate, the pine tree-covered sandbar in northern Kyoto.

Our trip to Hiroshima was especially poignant. Highlights included the A-Bomb Dome, Children's Peace Monument, Atomic Bomb Memorial Mound, Hiroshima National Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, and the Peace Memorial Museum.

The 10 days flew by much too quickly, but this phenomenal learning experience and all of the memories we brought back will be treasured by each of us for a lifetime. Of course, none of this would have been possible without our project leaders, George Balazs and Marc Rice, and I extend to them our deepest gratitude for their endless enthusiasm and passion for making these unprecedented educational opportunities available to our students. These gentlemen not only are *honu* heroes, they are student heroes. ■



ON THE COVER: Maya Chong '09 celebrates her graduation with (clockwise from top) dad, Quintin '80, mom, Teri '82, sisters Megan and Mikaela, and brother, Zeke '13. Photo by Positive Image.



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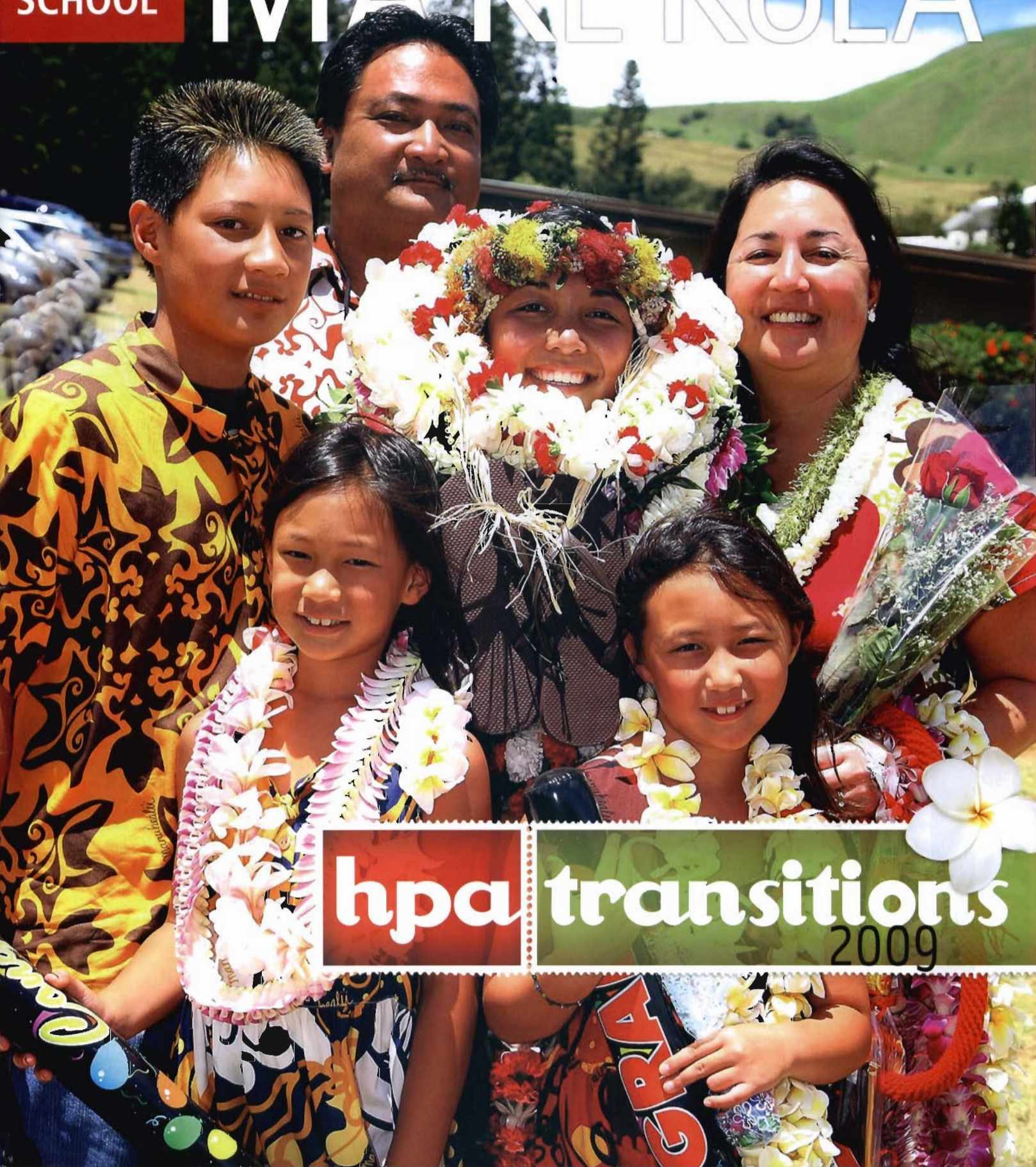


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# MAKE KULA



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