Students Present Research in Greece

By Alima Catellacci ’07 and Kulia Wooddell ’07

As the sun was rising over Mauna Kea on a clear Big Island morning, we were suiting up for a dive at Puako, Hawai‘i. Our friends and classmates were preparing for a typical day at school while we were testing scuba tanks and fitting masks. As the air bubbles cleared from our plunge into the deep blue of the Pacific, the familiar coral, sand, and marine life of the Puako turtle cleaning station came into view. Video camera ready, we approached our viewing area 30 feet below the surface and began the wait for a turtle to appear for cleaning. We could see clusters of the yellow tang and the golden ring surgeonfish, the most commonly documented cleaning fish. And there, just a shadow at first, slowly and gracefully approaching, the first turtle emerged from the vastness of the underwater world.

For the past year, under the guidance of Marc Rice, we have been studying and documenting the interactions between Hawaiian green turtles (*honu*) and reef fish at Puako. Commonly referred to as “cleaning symbiosis,” both the turtles and the fish benefit in this mutualistic relationship. Turtles from the Puako area come to the cleaning station where herbivorous reef fish remove algae from their shells and soft surfaces. We were interested in a number of things related to this process.

First, we wanted to know which fish most frequently cleaned the turtles. We discovered that the yellow tang and the golden ring surgeonfish were the leaders among the Puako fish in cleaning green sea turtles. Commonly referred to as “cleaning symbiosis,” both the turtles and the fish benefit in this mutualistic relationship. Turtles from the Puako area come to the cleaning station where herbivorous reef fish remove algae from their shells and soft surfaces. We were interested in a number of things related to this process.

Over the course of our study this year, we documented, through video, and countless hours of data analysis, four specific behaviors the turtles exhibited when they entered the cleaning station to attract fish. One of the most beautiful sights we saw was a gathering of three turtles, one floating above the other, surrounded by clusters of yellow tang and golden ring surgeons, busily doing their job of cleaning the patient turtles. We also began to recognize individual turtles by their face markings and identified 96 individuals using their head scale patterns.

All our work—the many dives, the missed classes, the hours in front of the computer organizing our data—was rewarded by a trip to the island of Crete, Greece, in March 2006. We were the youngest presenters to attend the 26th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium, which was held this year in Aghia Pelagia, Crete. Scientists from around the world gathered to address the issues confronting endangered sea turtle populations. We prepared a poster and a video of our research and were part of a comprehensive poster presentation on sea turtles living in the oceans and seas of our planet.

There we were, in a room full of the most prestigious marine scientists from Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, North and South America showing research and information...
Lights! Camera! Action!

Start planning now to get together for the reunion years '57, '62, '67, '72, '77, '82, '87, '92, '97, and '02. Reunion years are sure to be an unforgettable experience in California! To ensure you don’t miss out, save the date—June 1-3, 2007. It's a great way to stay connected with HPA alumni and to interact with the next generation of HPA students. Please contact us at srutgers@hpa.edu. We’re in this together!

Luau in California!

Start planning now to get together for Hawaiian food, music, and fun at Celia DeBenedetti’s home in Los Altos on Saturday, May 26, 2007. Watch the alumni site and the May 26, 2007 issue of the Ma Ke Kula for more details.

Greece - Continued from P.7

people. Dr. Solarin became our friend during our week in Crete, and we enjoyed hearing his stories about Nigeria.

Greece is a wonderful country and we had many great adventures while we were there. Before the conference, we were able to see Athens, visit the Acropolis and the Agora, and see the famous Archeological Museum. We traveled by ferry from Athens to Paros, where we toured the island on four wheelers. From Paros we went to Naxos, where we saw a 35-foot statue that was 2,500 years of Apollo, in the remote mountainous interior of the island.

From Naxos we ferried to Santorini, where we took a small boat trip around the volcanic island and actually jumped into the Aegean sea for a freezing swim! We finally landed on Crete, where we explored as much of the island as we could before the symposium started. A memorable experience was our journey to Mount Ida, where we explored the cave where the mythological Zeus was supposedly raised in safety from his ravenous father, Cronos.

Luau in California!

Start planning now to get together for Hawaiian food, music, and fun at Celia DeBenedetti’s home in Los Altos on Saturday, May 26, 2007. Watch the alumni site and the winter and spring issues of the Ma Ke Kula for more details.

Greece - Continued from P.7

people. Dr. Solarin became our friend during our week in Crete, and we enjoyed hearing his stories about Nigeria.

Greece is a wonderful country and we had many great adventures while we were there. Before the conference, we were able to see Athens, visit the Acropolis and the Agora, and see the famous Archeological Museum. We traveled by ferry from Athens to Paros, where we toured the island on four wheelers. From Paros we went to Naxos, where we saw a 35-foot statue that was 2,500 years of Apollo, in the remote mountainous interior of the island.

From Naxos we ferried to Santorini, where we took a small boat trip around the volcanic island and actually jumped into the Aegean sea for a freezing swim! We finally landed on Crete, where we explored as much of the island as we could before the symposium started. A memorable experience was our journey to Mount Ida, where we explored the cave where the mythological Zeus was supposedly raised in safety from his ravenous father, Cronos.

with ancient pots used by Minoans in Knossos.

With Mr. and Mrs. Rice, we went to the Palace of Knossos, and the Archeological Museum of Crete. We even went for a dive with Mr. Rice in the cold waters right off shore from our hotel, the Capsis. Thanks to Mr. Rice and his faithful mentoring, we have been able to do this research and have this unforgettable experience in Greece. Greece is an awesome place, with friendly and generous people, fantastic food, and incredible natural beauty.

Our research will continue next year. As we focus on specific turtles and their daily behaviors and habits, we plan to use time depth recorders and GPS technology to more accurately record turtles’ movement, feeding habits, and frequency of visits to the cleaning station.

Mahalo

The Office of Admissions would like to thank the following alumni for interviewing applicants to HPA for the 2006-2007 year. Your involvement is greatly appreciated. Scott Andrews ’93, Jean Adler Burgess ’81, Kimberley Giffin ’94, Farris Bogue James ’91, Lance Jeffery ’89, Kosei Kobayashi ’92, Eric Marconato ’95, Amy Nakamaru ’90, Jenny Santoro ’89, Doug Sheehan ’65, Cathie Toyoda Summers ’92, David Wilson ’98. If you would like to be involved in student interviews, please send an email to Stephanie Rutgers ’89 at srutgers@hpa.edu. We’re in this together! It’s a great way to stay connected with HPA and to interact with the next generation of HPA students.

Save The Date