



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
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August 15, 2005

Representative Michael Y. Magaoay
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 418
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Representative Magaoay,

It has come to my attention that you will be convening a citizen's task force to address concerns stemming from increasing visitor volume at Laniakea Beach on the north shore of Oahu. As you are probably aware, NOAA Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service share responsibility for administering the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) for listed sea turtles. NOAA Fisheries Service has also been contacted by citizens expressing concern about the magnitude and nature of interactions between visitors and sea turtles at Laniakea. The situation involving interactions between visitors and protected sea turtles at Laniakea and other sites around Hawaii is an important issue for NOAA Fisheries Service. We have been in discussion with the other state and federal agencies responsible for sea turtle management in Hawaii and have recently expanded outreach efforts to educate visitors about NOAA's respectable wildlife viewing guidelines. The guidelines were developed with the intention of eliminating the potential for harm and harassment of protected wildlife. This expanded outreach campaign is in the initial phases and NOAA Fisheries Service is further developing this campaign by working with the various state and federal management and enforcement bodies to explore solutions for effectively reducing potential harm and harassment of protected sea turtles. We also aim to provide enforcement bodies with a clear distinction between interactions calling for education and violations warranting prosecution under the ESA.

My staff is happy to participate in sea turtle discussions with the Laniakea task force. We welcome the opportunity to describe the expanded outreach efforts to the residents of the north shore and to get their ideas and feedback. I have asked Brandee Gerke (944-2239) of my staff to be the point of contact for this task force. Brandee will be out of the office from August 22 through September 13, 2005. Jeff Mangel (944-2268) will be the primary contact from NOAA Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office in her absence. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

William L. Robinson
Regional Administrator

cc: G. Antonelis, PIFSC
G. Balazs, PIFSC
J. Walters, DLNR/National Marine Sanctuary

