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From: **T. Todd Jones - NOAA Federal** <todd.jones@noaa.gov>

Date: Wed, Dec 21, 2016 at 5:50 PM

Subject: George Balazs

To: **_NMFS PIC PSD** <nmfs.pic.psd@noaa.gov>

Below is the excerpt I read aloud at the PSD all hands last week. For those of you who couldn't make it please see below.

Regards,

Todd

Some of you may have noticed George Balazs has been around off and on lately. To be exact he has been out every other week since October 1st, which is when he started phased retirement!

George's interest in marine turtles stems from a chance encounter in the nearshore waters of Bora Bora, French Polynesia in 1964. He even attempted to spear turtles for food in Tahiti (he claims he missed) where he was living at the time with his wife Linda. No doubt these activities spurred an interest in George, and his curiosity continued while he witnessed the commercial trade of turtles in Maui in 1969. George received a Bachelor and Master of Science from the University of Hawaii Animal Sciences in 1967 and 1969; and, shortly after reared turtles for research at the University of Hawaii beginning a life long journey into the conservation biology of wild turtles in the Pacific Region. In 1980 he joined NOAA as a fishery biologist and in 1983 he was hired as a Zoologist and led the Marine Turtle Research Program for over 3 decades. In this time George has authored over 350 papers on marine turtle biology and conservation. George has been recognized with a lifetime achievement award from the International Sea Turtle Society, received 2 bronze medals from NOAA in 1994 and 2000, and has been a member of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group since 1976 and Chair of the Oceania region since 2012.

George has had a remarkable career studying marine turtles and in the marine turtle community his name is synonymous with Archie Carr, Peter Pritchard, Nicholas Mrosovsky, and George Hughes for impact to the field.

However, it should be noted that while George has entered phased retirement from NOAA, he is just getting started for marine turtle conservation and biology...

We wish George well in phased retirement!!!

