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From: Paul Becker <paul.becker@noaa.gov>
Date: Thu, Feb 2, 2012 at 8:55 PM
Subject: NIST-PIFSC collaborations
To: Sam Pooley <sam.pooley.coop@noaa.gov>
Cc: Michael Seki <michael.seki@noaa.gov>

Hello Sam,

I would like to extend our appreciation for the efforts of George Balazs and the Marine Turtle Research Program staff at the PIFSC to develop a collaborative program with NIST for establishing a sea turtle biorepository and an associated analytical program to investigate contaminant exposure of these animals. As we began expanding some of our existing programs on marine mammals and seabirds into the U.S. Pacific Region, it was apparent that sea turtles are a top priority because of health and conservation concerns. George has been enthusiastic in working with us and we intend to provide additional analytical data and interpretation that we hope will support his program. Together with George's program, we collected samples from over 90 turtles in 2011 from live-captures, strandings, and longline fisheries. NIST is currently analyzing the samples for organic and inorganic contaminants and exploratory metabolite work is also ongoing that might provide some additional insight into response of these animals to diseases. The NIST lead for developing this sea turtle effort with George is Jennifer Keller, an organic analytical chemist who has done extensive work on contaminant exposure and health of loggerhead sea turtles. She and George are working very well together and will be co-authoring a presentation on this collaborative work at the 32nd International Sea Turtle Symposium this March. In addition, Jenn is preparing a NIST Internal Report describing the program, including objectives, rationale, and protocols.

We appear to be moving very rapidly in development of the biorepository and the analytical component that supports sea turtle research. This could not have been done without George's functioning field operations that are supported by the PIFSC's Marine Turtle Research Program. George has been extremely open, helpful, and excited about this collaboration. We are grateful for the efforts of him and his staff and look forward to the ongoing sampling and research efforts we have established together.

Best regards,
Paul