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2016

Students present honu conservation projects

Three Hawaii Preparatory Academy students are in Peru to present their projects at the 36th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation Feb. 29 through Friday.

The students, eighth graders Julia Ann Salvador and Anna Sorenson and senior Elizabeth Jim, will be among the youngest presenters at the event. Marc Rice, director of HPA's Sea Turtle Research Program, and Laura Jim, Middle School science teacher, are accompanying the students.

To date, 15 HPA students have presented at the symposium, which is held in various locations around the world. The event draws participants from many countries, from across disciplines and cultures to a common interest and objective — the conservation of sea turtles and their environment. The symposium encourages discussion, debate, and the sharing of knowledge, research techniques and lessons in

conservation, to address questions on the biology and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats.

Salvador and Sorenson, who started working with the program in seventh grade, will present "HPA/NOAA: A Successful Collaborative Program Spanning Twenty-Nine Years," which focuses on the school's partnership and work with NOAA and scientist George Balazs. Since its inception, HPA's Sea Turtle Research Program, directed by Rice, has provided students in grades 6-12 opportunities to participate in field research projects, which have included 249 tagging trips around Hawaii Island where more than 3,900 honu have been captured, tagged, measured, and safely released. Students also have assisted with research on Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Oahu, and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, and internationally in Australia, Japan, New Caledonia, Singapore, and on Midway Atoll.



HPA student Anna Sorenson, right, assists with the release of Honu K3 with satellite tag at Kahaluu Bay. SPECIAL TO WEST HAWAII TODAY

The students also will share information about the program's community outreach initiatives and independent student research focused on the biology of Hawaii's green and hawksbill turtles, and the school's participation in the Hawaii Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network.

"I'm really looking forward to the overall experience of presenting at an international symposium,"

said Sorenson.

Elizabeth Jim, who has worked with honu for many years, will present "Na Honu O Kahaluu: A Community-Based Research Project," which focuses on the Kahaluu Bay Education Center and its ReefTeach program.

Info: hpa.edu/academics/sea-turtle-research, internationalseaturtlesociety.org/#/

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