



Turtle Happenings

Apparently Microsoft's "genius" search engine, Bing, thinks this page is the place to send you if you search for "turtle" or "turtle". While it's nice to place near the top of Bing's search results, it would be better if it sent you to a page that wasn't discontinued since 2002. Please try starting at [the front page](#). I hope that is more useful to you.



- [Protector of the Honu gets well-deserved recognition \(05/04/02\)](#)
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Protector of the Honu gets well-deserved recognition (05/04/02)

The following is a press release by the National Wildlife Federation in conjunction with their Annual General Meeting, March 31, 2005.

George Balazs Honored For Wildlife Conservation Leadership

Reston, VA (April 1) - The nation's leading conservation organization dedicated to protecting wildlife is honoring George Balazs with its National Conservation Achievement Award for exemplary leadership in protecting wildlife and natural resources. George received his award for special achievement from the National Wildlife Federation at the organization's annual meeting in the nation's capital on March 31.

As a NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Species biologist, George devoted his entire 34-year career to recovery of the Hawaiian green sea turtle. He played a major role in getting the species added to the Endangered Species List in 1978, and then led efforts in subsequent years to uncover new information about the reptiles' biology and to educate the people of Hawaii about the islands' sea turtle heritage.

George became interested in the plight of the green turtle in 1971 while working as a biologist for the University of Hawaii's Institute



George at Laneakea, Oahu, with basking turtles. The honu in the foreground is formally known as L1, but he's popularly known as Brutus.

of Marine Biology. He began to question whether local island fishermen were harvesting the reptiles for their meat at a rate much higher than the turtle population could sustain. After studying historical accounts, he learned that the turtles nested at an isolated, uninhabited atoll, 500 miles from Honolulu. In 1973, he took it upon himself, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to get to the atoll - no easy task - during nesting season. That year, he counted just 67 turtles. For years afterwards, he returned to the site, camping out for weeks at a time, to study the animals and lead their recovery program. Last year, over 500 green turtles nested there, and about a dozen more nested on the main Hawaiian Islands.

George attributes much of the population increase to the protections of the Endangered Species Act. But he also believes that the statewide education effort, in which he has played a major role, has changed perceptions of Hawaii's residents of sea turtles from a source of food to a native species people are proud to protect. "He's a one-man show," says George's veterinarian colleague Robert Morris. "On his days off, what's George doing? He's out doing turtle work someplace. Not only the Hawaiian turtles, but in Japan and all over the world." Indeed, Balazs is now recognized as one of the world's foremost sea turtle experts. His work has been published in numerous scientific publications and he has served as a scientific advisor on a prestigious list of global turtle conservation groups.

In addition to his recovery work and observations at the breeding site, George has gathered important new data about other aspects of the turtles' life cycle. Through the use of radio transmitters, for instance, he has discovered that the animals navigate hundreds of miles each year to feeding areas, without using any landmarks to get their bearings.

George believes that cooperation has been the real key to his success over the years. "In Hawaii we call it Ho'olaulima - working together in partnership. There is not a day that goes by that I don't strive for new partners and for strengthening bonds with existing ones."

The National Conservation Achievement Awards were established in 1965 to recognize individuals and organizations playing a leadership role in helping to protect wildlife and wild places. Nominations are received from the conservation community and the general public with winners selected by the National Wildlife Federation Board of Directors.

Other recipients of this year's conservation awards include Lady Bird Johnson, Senators McCain and Lieberman, Governor Bill Richardson and journalist Elizabeth Shogren. The National Wildlife Federation

is America's conservation organization protecting wildlife for our children's future.

For more information, contact Aislinn Maestas (NWF): 703-438-6099



Turtles in the news discontinued (05/01/01)

Thanks to resources like [Google News](#), this news summary has gradually become redundant. It is therefore with sadness that we have decided that the effort required to maintain this resource would be better used elsewhere. Please refer to [What's Changed Lately](#) for more information, and thanks for visiting.



There and back again: a sea turtle's tale



For the past nine months, a juvenile Hawaiian green turtle has been providing scientists with fascinating information. Equipped with a satellite transmitter, the turtle travelled around the islands on a 3,000 mile loop before returning to a spot about 100 yards away from where she (he?) started.

22270 was born at Sea Life Park on Oahu from stock that predates the Endangered Species Act. Some of the hatchlings from these turtles are fostered in a pond at the Mauna Lani Resort on the Big Island. They remain there until they are about three years old, then under the supervision of George Balazs, head of sea turtle research for the NMFS in Hawaii, the hotel releases them as part of the hotel's annual "Turtle Independence Day."

Last July, George selected 22270 to carry a satellite transmitter, and on July 4th the turtle was released seven miles offshore of the Mauna Lani. The hope was that the little honu would take up a deep-water life, and for a while that was what happened. Then, for reasons only a turtle could know, she (he?) decided to go--home.

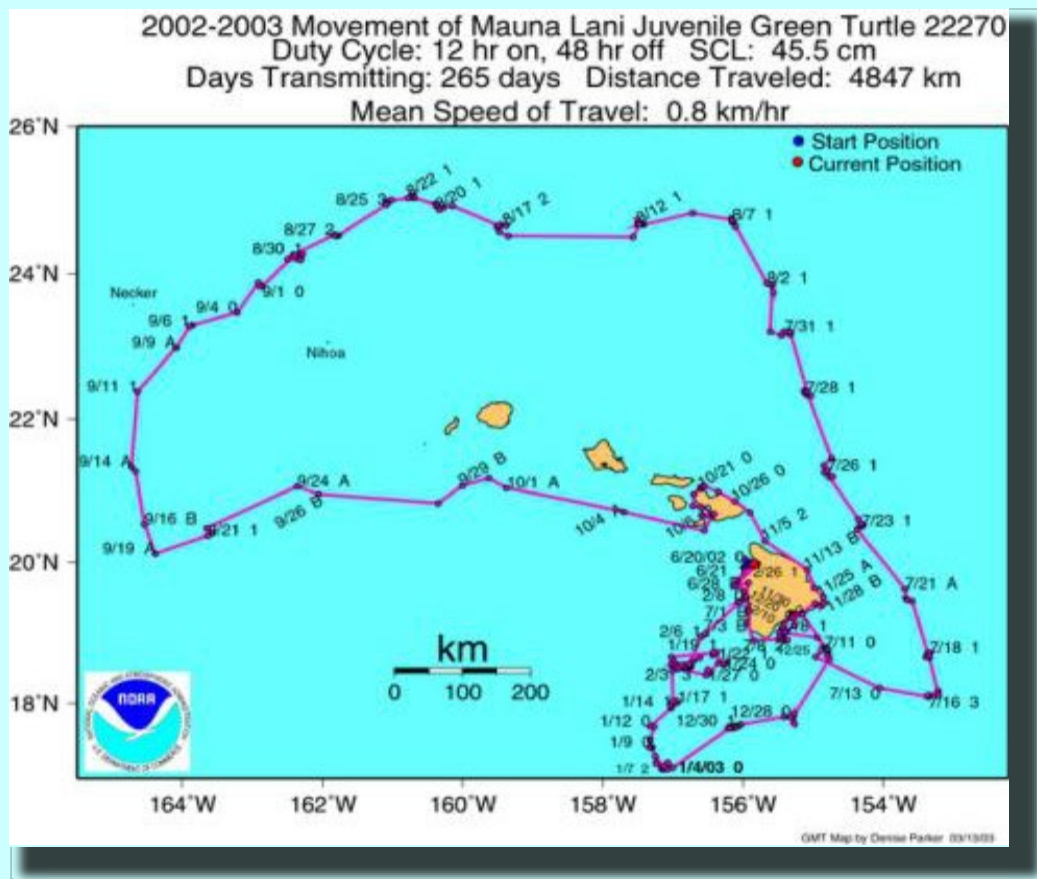
***22270 swimming merrily
along near the Mauna Lani
Resort in South Kohala,
Hawaii.***

*[Photo © Steve Boreri
69K JPEG](#)*

Steve Boreri, a diver working out of the Mauna Lani, spotted 22270 on February 20 and managed to get the photograph accompanying this story. Steve had been one of the people assisting in 22270's release, so it was a double thrill to be the first to spot the turtle's return.

Apparently 22270 likes the old neighbourhood because that's where she (he?) has stayed. Marc Rice, a colleague of George and head of the Sea Turtle Research Program at Hawaii Preparatory Academy, visited the Mauna Lani and removed the transmitter. 22270 blends in with the crowd now, but the turtle's contribution to understanding the species is invaluable. The data from the transmitter will be correlated with other information such as

currents and temperatures in order to learn as much as possible about 22270's great journey.



Tracking Map

Prepared by Denise Parker

Courtesy of George Balazs

141K JPEG

For more about this story, see:

- ["Turtle's isle journey tracked by satellite" Honolulu Star-Bulletin](#)
- ["Traveling turtle returns" West Hawaii Today](#)



If you have news, pictures, stories, or anecdotes about sea turtles that you would like to have posted in this section of *Turtle Trax*, send us email:

howzit@turtles.org (Ursula Keuper-Bennett), or
webmaster@turtles.org (Peter Bennett)

[Summer of '04 at Honokowai](#)



[Summer of '03 at Honokowai](#)



[Summer of '02 at Honokowai](#)



[Summer of '01 at Honokowai](#)



[21st Annual Sea Turtle Symposium at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)



[Summer of '00 at Honokowai](#)



[Play-by-play of COPS 11](#)



[20th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium at Orlando, Florida](#)



[Tribute to Ila Loetcher, the Texas Turtle Lady](#)



[Summer of '99 at Honokowai](#)



[19th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium at South Padre Island, Texas](#)



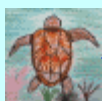
[X'cacel: Mexican nesting beach in trouble](#)



[18th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium at Mazatlan \(English\)](#)



[18th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium at Mazatlan \(Spanish\)](#)



[GTFP on the Internet](#)

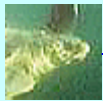




[Huffy, the Turtle That Won't Give Up](#)



[Project Paola](#)



[The Remarkable Journey of Adelita](#)



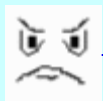
[Kuwait Diving Team Rescues Trapped Sea Turtles](#)



[Hawaii Senate Resolution 29](#)



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Last modified 09/08/12

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