



East Island, French Frigate Shoals, Hawaii. Photo courtesy G. H. Balazs

Turtle Trax



Lahaina, Maui: tracks of 5690 making her sixth nest in 2002.

A Page Devoted to Marine Turtles

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT TURTLE TRAX](#)

[DEDICATION](#)

[METAPHORICAL MISSION STATEMENT](#)

Week of August 4-11, 2007

August 11th, 2007

Dedication

This summer's summaries are dedicated to Jose, without whom they would not have been possible. [Mahalo nui loa](#), Jose.

The world of topsy-turvy

Well, we just can't explain it. Sure, we're jaded. Used to a ton of turtles. Not just lots but hawksbills, a hawksbill hybrid, plus a black sea turtle all thrown in. A couple of past summers we logged in over 200 turtles in a season.

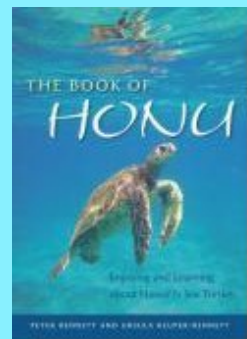
Now?

Admittedly we don't dive nearly as much as during our halcyon days. Yes, the Turtle House has been reduced to slimy rubble, and of course, K17 Rock and Mount Balazs (both top turtle resting spots) have completely vanished.

We also tell ourselves that already this year we wrote about so few turtles. Then a few days later, there they were in abundance, littering the bottom like in the Good Old Days. This week, precious little again.

Why?

THE BOOK OF HONU



Now available!

PAGES

[About this blog](#)

[The Complete Turtle Trax Videos on YouTube](#)

SEARCH THE BLOG

ARCHIVES

[Expand All](#)

August 2011 (2)

02: [In commemoration](#)

We have a theory.

We've mentioned the scarcity of seaweed. We're speculating that we don't see honu on the reef because they're busy feeding somewhere. The lack of food in the area means they have to forage more. Possibly some have moved on to greener pastures, so to speak.

There are increasing reports of honu feeding along the shore here in the daytime. On the other hand, we've taken the kayak up to the foraging area to the north several evenings now, and there's almost nobody there--yet we know there's still at least some food there. Confusing? You bet.

Wana's PIT tag

We've known Wana since 2000. In 2005, she was missing. We saw her again in 2006, and she had a number engraved on her shell, meaning that she'd nested the previous summer. Unfortunately, the number had become hard to read and although we could guess at what it was, we couldn't be certain. We did know she now had a PIT tag.

For those who don't know, a PIT tag is a tiny microchip that is harmlessly embedded in the turtle's hind flipper while she is in her nesting trance. To read them, however, requires a special reader. Unfortunately, no one makes one intended for use underwater.

This summer, George Balazs lent us a PIT tag reader and an EWA marine bag. We took it out to Reef 2 and swiped Wana's rear flippers with it. BEEP--as easy and sweet as that, we had a positive ID on her. With those numbers the mystery of her faded 2005 mototool was also cleared up. (It was, as we had come to believe, 77.)



[of Jose: a night atop Haleakala](#) (0)

23: [Summer of '11](#) (44)

[July 2011](#) (1)

[November 2010](#) (1)

[November 2009](#) (1)

[October 2009](#) (1)

[September 2009](#) (1)

[August 2009](#) (3)

[July 2009](#) (5)

[September 2008](#) (1)

[August 2008](#) (4)

[July 2008](#) (3)

[February 2008](#) (1)

[November 2007](#) (3)

[October 2007](#) (4)

[September 2007](#) (5)

[August 2007](#) (4)

[July 2007](#) (2)

RECENT COMMENTS:

[joe](#): i love turtles!!!

[Nancy](#): Aloha
Looked out from my lanai this morning and was met with surprise and happiness to see the...

[bruce drye](#): you guys are still doing great work. keep it up. I'm still inspired by your efforts.

[Charlayna](#): Hiroko Okuda- Was the turtle a Hawksbill? Did it have a jagged shell? Hawksbill sea turtle are not...

[Peter](#): Aloha Marsha, Mahalo for

At long last, we've got Wana's PIT tag!

Click image to enlarge

the kind words. On Oahu you can volunteer with Malama Na Honu. See...

Now George Balazs has yet another turtle with a long term history prior to being registered in his database, and we have more background on Wana. [Mahalo](#) to George for the help.

Sometimes you just have to take it out on someone...

Now, we wouldn't want you to get the impression that the honu are quarrelsome. They really are pretty peaceful for the most part. When they do squabble, it is almost always about territory—one turtle wants the spot occupied by another. The operative word there is "almost"...

Just when you're not sure what next to write about...

Went for a dive today. Water was cloudy. So was the sky. We knew it'd be the kind of dive where all we'd be getting is exercise and little more. Got to Reef 2 and sure enough, grim. Few turtles, lots of nothing else. Even the fish seemed to be missing.

Of the five to eight turtles there, no one was doing anything other than resting. Ursula found a hawksbill crater—the second in a week. We are now actively speculating how likely it is for these craters to actually be dug by Wai? instead of a real hawksbill. The last time we saw Wai?, there was a new crater

nearby. We didn't see Wai? today, but we did yesterday. So this is an exciting question actually. Yet Wai? is around so rarely we just can't imagine having that answered for us.

Most of the dive was just back and forth sweeps of East House through to The Battery and back. Then toward the end of the dive, Ursula kicked over atop Reef 1 and saw a shell. She recognized Zeus immediately.

YIPPY-YAYS! Zeus let Ursula take as much video and photos as she wanted. Then she swam over to Peter and signalled for him to swim s-l-o-w-l-y towards—and she indicated the top of Reef 1. Puzzled, he swam cautiously over, peeked, and got a wonderful surprise. He was overjoyed to see the Big Guy again. To our delight, we both got quality time with Zeus.



Zeus resting atop Reef 1. The white scab tissue at the trailing edge of his flipper are often acquired during mating.

Click image to enlarge

Readers of our past summer summaries know that Zeus, for years a regular at Honokowai, almost disappeared a few years ago. Since then, we count ourselves lucky to see him once a summer.

Moral of the story

It ain't the number of the turtles we see, but rather who. If we really wanted four dozen turtles in one dive, we can have that consistently up the road at our alternate site. We realize we'd be happy seeing just one turtle provided it's an old friend.

It would be so easy to switch over to Kuamo'o and dive among Plenty, but those turtles are strangers. Honokowai, just like

Zeus himself, is Family.

We're still holding out hopes to see [Tutu](#) again.

You know you're really desperate for news when...

...you start reporting on Turtle Burps.

Post Linx

[Permalink](#) | [Trackback](#) | [Email to a Friend](#) | [Print This Article](#)

Comments

Comments are closed.

Find stuff on Turtle Trax

Google

Copyright © 2007-2009 Turtle Trax • Powered by
Wordpress • Based on the MK1.02 theme

Turtle Trax and **turtles.org** are
hosted by E-Gate
Communications, a provider of



excellent quality and superb service.