

OUR VIEW

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

# Delisting honu is difficult call

**F**ew of Hawaii's aquatic creatures hold the allure of the green sea turtle. For locals and visitors alike, there's an elemental thrill at the sight of gentle honu popping their heads above the water or nibbling seaweed on nearshore reefs. Along Kamehameha Highway, they cause traffic jams as drivers pull over to see them feed near Laniakea Beach on the North Shore. They've even become an icon of sorts, appearing on everything from placemats to earrings.

Perhaps their popularity comes from their increasing numbers: Recent studies have documented a healthy growth in the Hawaiian population of the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), with one study showing an annual increase of 5.7 percent since the 1970s. This is not the case everywhere. The breeding populations in Florida and the Pacific coast of Mexico are considered endangered. And in the rest of the species range, including the Hawaiian islands, the turtle is considered threatened.

tion was drafted and edited by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, an agency that has often clashed with environmental groups over conservation rules, including restrictions on longline fishing to protect leatherback and loggerhead turtles. But commercial interests don't appear to be at issue here. There is little evidence that the green turtles' protected status has done harm to recreational and commercial fishing.

Rather, the association says a delisting would return responsibility for the honu to the state and its citizens, including Native Hawaiians and cultural practitioners. Such a change in management would raise some new possibilities and difficult questions: Should Native Hawaiians, however they are defined, be allowed to resume the traditional harvesting of honu? Should rules against the incidental hooking or netting of honu be relaxed, or should the population be protected as closely as it is now?

As a threatened species, the green turtle in Hawaiian waters has enjoyed the protection of the federal Endangered Species Act. But as its population grows, the turtle's threatened species status is becoming, well, threatened.

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, citing the population studies, has petitioned the federal government to remove that status in two stages: first, by classifying the Hawaiian turtle population as a "discrete population segment," distinguishing it from other green turtle populations; and second, by delisting the Hawaiian turtles.

The association's peti-

The National Marine Fisheries Service will consider whether the scientific evidence justifies a delisting, a process that could take more than a year. Regardless of the outcome, however, it's hard to justify a situation that would leave the green sea turtle with the same status as most other aquatic life in Hawaiian waters — open to indiscriminate harvesting. The association doesn't want that, and neither should anyone else. It has taken years for the turtle population to recover. As an *aumakua*, it has cultural and historical significance. And it is certainly far more valuable as a living creature, enjoyed by countless ocean visitors, than as a source of meat.

4 CHEYENNE, WYO.

9/1/12 H5-A 44

## Wolf protection lifted in Wyoming

The federal government will end its protections for wolves in Wyoming, where the species was introduced two decades ago to revive it from near extinction in the United States.

The announcement Friday by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will entrust the state with managing wolf numbers and endorses a plan that allows for them to be shot on sight in most of the state, while keeping the animals permanently protected in designated areas like Yellowstone National Park. Wyoming will take over management of the wolves at the end of September.

The decision sparked

promises of legal challenges from environmental groups that argue wolves still need protection to maintain their successful recovery.

Wyoming has been chafing under federal wolf protections for years, with ranchers and hunters complaining that wolves kill other wildlife and cattle.

North America was once home to 2 million gray wolves, but by the 1930s fur traders, bounty hunters and government agents had nearly exterminated them in the continental U.S. There are about 270 wolves in Wyoming outside Yellowstone.

Associated Press



# 'Honu' sure to dazzle

By John Berger  
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STAR-ADVERTISER

A surfer named Kainoa does a favor for a starfish and is granted a wish in return. His wish — to be able to breathe underwater — is granted for a day. Kainoa meets a honu (sea turtle) named Malia whose mother is tangled in a derelict fishing net in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. He volunteers to help his new friend rescue her mother, and several other under-sea creatures join them.

Welcome to "Honu by the Sea," a new musical for children at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

Zare Anguay (Kainoa) and Madison Eror (Malia) are the central characters in writer-composer Johnson Enos' colorful sugarcoated lesson about the ecological damage done by man when his trash finds its way to the ocean. Kids will enjoy the choreographed antics of cast members whose animated performances transcend language.

Bryce Irvine ('O), Barry Quilloy (Pi) and KoDee Martin (Hi) are instant favorites as a trio of hardworking opihi. Carlos Chang (Shaka) is an eye-catching acrobatic black crab whose help is needed to cut through the netting. Miguel Cadoy III (Hula Hoop) stole the show at the media-preview performance last month with his scene as a showroom octopus. Cadoy's costume puts four of his eight octopus legs on his backside, and they shake vigorously at key moments in his showcase musical number — the young children in the preview audience were mesmerized.

The show is more about the many song-and-dance numbers than the rescue mission itself, but kids will absorb an important message about ocean debris while they're enjoying Kainoa's underwater adventures.

"Honu by the Sea" is available in show-only and dinner-show packages.

Dinner is presented buffet style on the ocean-front lawn outside the Monarch Room. Seating is not reserved.

Barry Quilloy (an opihi named Pi), left, Miguel Cadoy III (Hula Hoop the octopus) and Bryce Irvine ('O the opihi) in "Honu by the Sea."

## 'HONU BY THE SEA'

- >> **Where:** Monarch Room, Royal Hawaiian Hotel
- >> **When:** 7 p.m. Wednesday and Sunday through Sept. 30; dinner service at 5:30 p.m.
- >> **Cost:** \$49 (ages 13 and older) and \$35 (ages 4-12); dinner-show package is \$95 (13 and older) and \$65 (4-12); premium package is \$125 (13 and older) and \$85 (4-12)
- >> **Info:** 921-4600 or [www.honubythesea.com](http://www.honubythesea.com)