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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Green turtles are resilient

About Hurricane Walaka washing away the green turtle (honu) nesting island of Hikina (East Island) in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands ("Remote Hawaiian island largely wiped out by hurricane," Star-Advertiser, Oct. 26):

Surely this is one of the most exciting times of my 48-year career working with Hawaiian green turtles. The loss of East Island at French Frigate Shoals started decades ago, documented by photo evidence. My first stay on the island was as a University of Hawaii sea

turtle researcher in 1973.

The loss of the island is part of a natural long-term process where sand, unlike stone, comes and goes, accumulates and then washes away in cycles. Sea turtles for millennia have always been able to adapt to such changes. If they hadn't they would all have gone extinct long ago.

The Hawaiian green turtle population is robust, durable and incredibly adaptive. They will figure out where to nest new and it will be insightful and amazing to watch it happen over the next few years.

With confidence in both Mother Nature and the honu of Hawaii,

*George H. Balazs*  
Golden Honu Services  
of Oceania  
Hawaii Kai