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HAWAII NEWS | TOP NEWS

# Turtle loses flipper but gains a second chance at life

By [Nina Wu](#) · Jan. 31, 2020



1/2



COURTESY DLNR VIA NOAA

Turtle 1036 heads for the ocean on the North Shore of Oahu.

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A green sea turtle whose flipper was amputated after getting caught in fishing line is now back home in the ocean, thanks to some help from humans.

Volunteers and staff from [Hawaii Marine Animal](#)

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[Response](#) and others on Thursday released the 250-pound turtle — marked as 1036 on its shell — on Oahu’s North Shore.

Once 1036 was on the sand, he made a beeline for the ocean and swam off into the horizon.

The injured turtle was found on the North Shore and reported to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration via its hotline for marine animal emergencies earlier this month. NOAA found the turtle’s front, right flipper injured after being wrapped in monofilament fishing line, and veterinarians determined it was best to amputate it.

While 1036 has a second chance at life, scientists said his breeding days are over — male turtles need both front flippers to hold on to a female while mating.

The turtle’s plight is just one example of a growing number of marine mammals injured or killed by fishing gear, according to NOAA officials.

Monofilament line entanglement from coastal hook-and-line fisheries is currently the primary threat to turtles in Hawaii, according to Summer Martin, leader of the NOAA Marine Turtle Biology Assessment Program, which has been monitoring them since 1982.

Both monofilament and braided nylon line pose a much greater threat to the turtles than fish hooks, contrary to what many people think, turtle experts said. Turtles can live with hooks, which eventually rust and fall off. Fishing lines, however, can result in a damaged flipper or be ingested, and cause blockages in the digestive system.

NOAA has been reaching out to the fishing community with information on how to safely remove line from a live, entangled turtle or how to contact volunteers and staff for help. The fishing community is also encouraged to use barbless hooks.

“Despite everything, turtles are pretty resilient,” said Irene Kelly, NOAA’s Sea Turtle Recovery Coordinator for the Pacific Islands Region. “1036 swam away quickly and strongly. He appeared to wobble briefly as he compensated for his missing front fin. Unfortunately, most turtles caught up in monofilament or braided nylon fishing line are either dead when we’re notified or have to be put down because their injuries are too severe.”

Turtle 1036 will likely be swimming around Waialua. NOAA encourages residents to report sightings of the turtle via [respectwildlife@noaa.gov](mailto:respectwildlife@noaa.gov), so scientists can keep track of his healing progress.



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Saturday, February 8, 2020



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NOAA's statewide marine animal response hotline is 888-256-9840.

[Turtle 1036 Gets a Second Chance](#) from [Hawaii DLNR](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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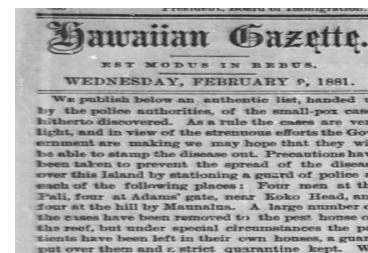
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