



HPA Sea Turtle Research and Conservation Program Activities

Friday, October 2, 2020

Working to Help an Injured Honu

TURTLE RESCUE - KAHALU'U STATE PARK





UPDATE: Our Kahalu'u turtle seems to be doing well and the flipper is healing nicely. It has been observed feeding and it is using the flipper to swim (which it wasn't before).

Kathleen Clark (Kohala Center) writes:

Over the last few weeks we have observed the turtle feeding and over the weekend one of our volunteers took a video of it using its injured flipper to swim! The attached photo shows the turtle in mid September before it was assisted and the next one shows its current status.

Contributors

-  Laura Jim
-  mrice

Blog Archive

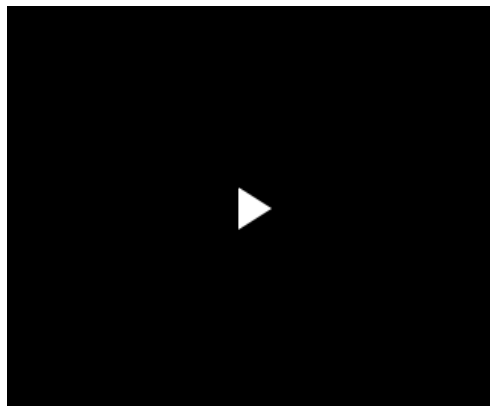
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K20 injury in mid-September (pre-treatment)



K20's current status.. healing nicely..as of Nov. 15, 2020.



Video of K20 taken by a Kahalu'u Reef Teach Volunteer showing that K20 is able to use its flipper to swim.

September 14, 2020 Kahalu'u Bay State Park Dathleen from Kohala Center (Marine Stewardship and Education Specialist-Kahalu'u Bay Education Center) reported "We have been seeing this honu it at Kahalu'u recently with white on its right front flipper. Someone said it looked like it wasn't using that flipper but I didn't notice that. This is the only photo I have (its not great). Any ideas as to why this might happen? Is it something that should be reported?"



The turtle resting under the coral head. You can see the white fringe on the right front flipper. The white material is necrotic tissue and indicates that there is something amiss with the flipper. This is typical of a flipper that has been affected by fishing line entanglement.



Above and below are images of the right front flipper showing the necrosis of the tissue.



It was proposed that we try and recover that animal and see if we could evaluate the injury and decide if the turtle might be able to survive and if we could help it get well.

On Friday, September 25th, Laura Jim and Marc Rice from the Hawaii Preparatory Academy's Sea Turtle Research Program went down to Kahalu'u to try to recover this turtle and allow a veterinarian to evaluate the injury and make a decision on what to do for the honu.

We were able to capture the animal with the help of the reef teach folks and put it into a carrier for transport to the veterinarian in Ocean View. It took us about 1 hour to drive south to ocean view where we had Dr. Agnes Horvath evaluate the health and prognosis of the turtle.

We drew a blood sample, did a packed cell volume and total protein analysis and found both within an acceptable range. External observation showed that the little honu was still robust in its movements and that it had innervation and circulation in the injured flipper. After conferring with a turtle specialist NOAA veterinarian it was decided that the turtle was healthy enough to remain in the wild and allow it time to heal. Dr. Horvath abraded and cleaned the wound and put antiseptic material on the wounded area.

Subsequently, we drove the turtle back to Kahalu'u and released it at 1330 hours on the same day. Laura and Kathleen released the turtle which swam off. It has been observed frequently since the being release and seems to be doing ok so far.



Kathleen and Laura carry the injured Honu back to Kahalu'u Bay.



The little guy swims free and, hopefully, it will be able to heal itself over the next few months.

We won't know for several months if it is going to survive but at least it has a chance.

Posted by mrice at 5:09 PM No comments:



Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Rescuing Turtles During the Pandemic

May 3, 2020



A couple of honu vie for cleaner fishes at the turtle cleaning station.

While we are unable to do any field work during the "shut-down", Ms Jim and I are still able to conduct turtle rescues, etc. as long as we can maintain social distancing and use proper precautions.

We recovered a dead baby hawksbill... so sad for the harbor in Kawaihae and it is currently waiting necropsy on Oahu in April.

On April 28 we received a call from a diver (Kimi) who had observed a turtle with fishing line around its right front flipper. It was cutting into and strangulating the limb. While she tried to help she didn't have anything to cut the line with. We noted also that there was a facebook post by someone else talking about the same turtle. As a result of the conversation with Kimi Ms Jim and I planned a dive the following weekend to try and find the entangled turtle. We were under no illusions that we would be able to find it, but we felt the need to try (It is a big ocean!)

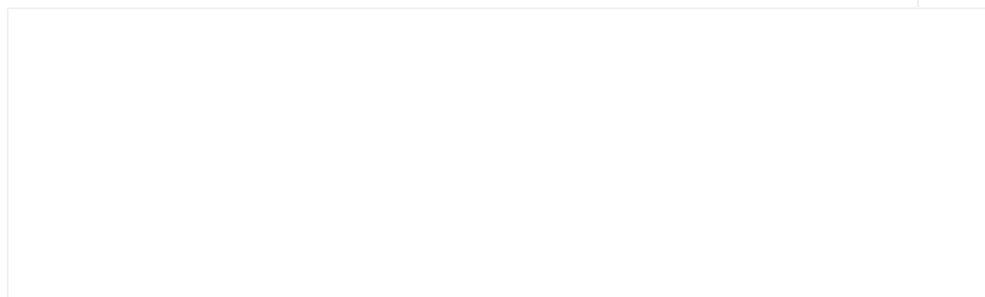
On Sunday morning, 5/3/20, we made our dive at Paniau where the turtle had been reported. We searched in caves and swam the area where it had been seen previously. About 70 minutes into our dive, having really sort of given up finding the turtle, we looked up as we were coming out of the second canyon lava tube and saw a turtle swimming about 4 meters above us. Noting that it wasn't using its right flipper to swim, we immediately agreed that this must be our turtle.

We swam along with the critter for a while but it didn't appear to want us to get too close. I was about to give up, but Laura Jim would not! She swam off stealthily after the turtle and was able to get close enough to grab the hind flipper and get control of it. I was so excited to see her returning towards me with the turtle. Once we both had control of the turtle, we swam to the surface and began to figure out how to disentangle and remove the monofilament fishing line.

I held the little turtle on my chest while Ms Jim slowly unwound and cut the line from around the right front flipper. It took about 15 minutes to complete the job (waves slapping us in the face, coving up the turtle and bouncing us around) and remove all of the line around the flipper. Once all the line was removed, we took a few photos and then release the juvenile honu to continue on its way.

The right front flipper was severely impacted by the line and was quite swollen. We have hope that it may regain use of the flipper over time but it will probably never completely heal. We may be able to see this little guy in the future and it will be nice to document how it is doing after being cleared of that terrible fishing line.

Below are some pictures of the turtle and the flipper that was impacted:





This Photo shows the right front flipper with the fishing line around it. It is obvious that the line has cut into the flipper and is strangulating the blood flow and cutting into the flesh... a very slow, painful way to lose a flipper.



After the line was removed, the extent of the injury is obvious. Our hope is that the juvenile honu will heal and regain full use of the flipper. If the fishing line was not removed, there is little doubt that the limb would have been lost.



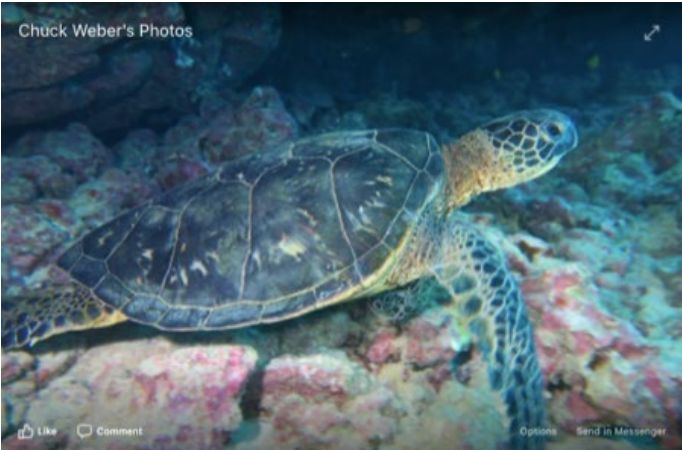
You should be able to identify this honu by the scale patterns on the right and left (below) side of head in case you see it while diving some time. We hope you will share your observations with us so we can see if it recovers from its wounds.



Left Side of head scale pattern for identification purposes.

Some of the facebook posts about the turtle are shown below:

Chuck Weber's Photos



Chuck Weber
April 29 · Edited

This is the turtle I saw on Sunday, under the overhang between Paniau north and south moorings. Went looking for him/her Monday and today with line cutter. This is same turtle I believe had line on the same right shoulder we saw last year. Not a big turtle. This turtle was in 25 foot depth.

👍 1

Like Comment

Write a reply...

Puako General is in Puako, Hawaii.
April 29 at 7:01 PM · 🌐


Calling all shore divers: there is a report of a turtle with fishing line wrapped around its front flipper. Last sighted straight out from the luas at Paniau by the 1st cave where the shelf starts. NOAA cannot help turtles in the water. The honu was unable to be freed by the diver who spotted it. (Photo is on our profile wall)

👍👎👉 34

10 Comments 22 Shares

Kimberly Nichols ▸ **Puako General**
April 29 at 6:51 PM · 🌐

This Honu is in trouble! He has a lot of fishing line wrapped around his front right flipper and it is cutting off his circulation. He lives right at Paniau Beach at the end of Puako. Can anyone please help him?





Laura Jim Aloha everyone from HPA's Sea Turtle Research Program and Rescue Group! We are happy to report that Marc Rice and I were able to find the turtle shared in these posts and fully remove the monofilament line entangling its right front flipper. Included image of the amount of line removed from the turtle. The line was cutting through the dermal layer but the subadult green sea turtle was able to show movement in its flipper as it swam away. Hoping for a speedy healing and recovery. Thank you to everyone who showed such compassion and empathy for this turtle.



Like · Reply · 1m

Posted by [mrice](#) at 3:03 PM No comments:



Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Mauna Lani Hotel- Honu Weigh-in

2/26/2020

Marc Rice and a group of 4 HPA students went down to the Mauna Lani Hotel to do the monthly weighing and measuring of their 6 juvenile Honu. We arrived at 0830 and assisted Pi'i and Ethan to get the turtles out of their pond and scrub the algae off of their carapaces. After the cleaning operation, each turtle was measured, weighed and tagged prior to being released back into their pond.

All six of the honu look in top shape, well feed, active and robust.

The HPA students did a great job of taking measurements and interacting with the hotel guests that stopped by to see what we were doing.

Below are a few pictures of the activities of the day.



Pi'i Laeha surveys the turtle pond looking for a honu.



One honu in the net and ready for transfer to the carrier.



Ethan transfers a honu from the net to the carrier.



The HPA team scrubs the algae off of the carapace of each of the six turtles.



The HPA team with a honu on the measuring table.



Measuring the straight carapace length.



Hikari measures the curved carapace length.



Measuring the curved carapace width.



Johana measures the straight length of the plastron.



Measuring the tail and vent length.

Posted by mrice at 4:15 PM No comments:



Monday, February 24, 2020

Fishing Line Entangled Turtle

2/23/2020

Sunday

Below is the information about a turtle that Ms Jim and I worked on Sunday afternoon. It was entangled in fishing line and we were able to remove the line and set it free.

Location: Hilton Waikoloa, Waikoloa, Hawaii Island, Hawaii

Responders: Marc Rice and Laura Jim

Date: 2/23/2020

Time: 1230 h

Grace from the Hilton Lagoon area called to say that they had a turtle entangled with fishing line. They had captured the turtle and put it into a secure area in the shade. We made our way down to the Hilton, arriving at 1350 hours. Security escorted us to the lagoon where we found the turtle in good condition.

We proceeded to remove what was left of the fishing line (they had removed most of it already). Because the left front flipper was seriously cut into and swelled, we looked carefully and deeply into the wound to make sure that there was no line left.. we removed a few lengths of line but there appeared to be no more line encircling the flipper. While it was swollen, it appeared that the turtle still had use of the flipper and there was no necrosis evident. Consequently, we decided that it was ok to release the turtle in the hope that with the restriction removed, the fin could heal.

In addition to the flipper entanglement, there was one strand of line going down the throat. Hook was not visible so the line was snipped off as short as possible deep in the throat regions.

The turtles was previously tagged so we measured it and put moto tool number

HA101 on the 3rd left lateral scute.

Date: 2/23/20

Time of release back to water: 1430

Location: 19.925030 N 155.888020 W

Species: Cm

Tags: LH 4C3B400A3E

RH 4C3B601863

MT: HA101

CCL = 57.0

CCW = 49.5

Body Condition: Very Robust

Turtle was safely released at 1430 h and swam away vigorously.



Ms Jim transfers the hone to a carrier so that we can work at removing the fishing line. Note that the honu is very "plump".



The Fishing line had cut into the left front flipper about 1/4" to 3/8" but the honu still had use of the flipper. We were able to remove the line from the flipper but one strand was going into the mouth and we were unable to remove all of it. Hopefully, the turtle will be able to pass the line that was swallowed.





We added a moto tool number so that snorkelers could report when they see the honu.



An appreciative group of tourists watched as we tended to the honu. The honu was observed and captured by some guests at the hotel... we are very appreciative of their efforts and the wonderful cooperation and help we got from the

hotel staff.



Time to release our honu.



Being release.



High five after the turtle swam vigorously off.



This is the type of line that was entangling the honu- very dangerous stuff for a honu.

Posted by mrice at 5:02 PM No comments:



Saturday, February 8, 2020

Line Entangled Sea Turtle

Sunday, 2/2/2020

RESCUE OF ENTANGLED TURTLE AT HILTON WAIKOLOA

A text from Dolphin Quest (DQ) (1421 h) said that a tourist reported a basking turtle with fishing line around its flippers. The personnel at DQ agreed to go and keep an eye on the turtle while I drove down. I got there at 1455 h and walked out to the area where they were observing the turtle. We restrained the turtle and removed the fishing line from around the left and right front flippers. There were no injuries from the entanglement. On viewing the ventral side I noted that the plastron was sunken..

Emaciation code 1.



The DQ team kept an eye on the entangled turtle in case it decided to go back in the water.



This 60 cm turtle (CCL) had fishing line around its two front flippers and its neck. We were able to remove the line without problem.





Here is the line and golf ball "sinker" that was around the flippers and neck of the Honu.





Here I apply a PIT tag to the left hind flipper of the honu.





With all the line removed, the honu looks healthy and ready for release.





The team DQ and I lift the turtle up and transport it back to the water for release.

Two PIT tags were applied (LH and RH)-see below
Turtle was released at 1540 and swam away vigorously.

Location:

19.926932°N

155.886793°W

Species: Cm

CCL = 63 CM

Time of Capture: 1515 h

Time of Release: 1540 h

New Tags: LH = 4C3D133F2F

RH =4853370C0E

E CODE= 1

Total time for incident: 100 minutes. Distance = 32 miles

Posted by mrice at 4:22 PM No comments:



Monday, February 3, 2020

Vanuatu Satellite Tagging Project- 2020

2/3/2020

From: Laura Jim, Associate Director, STRP

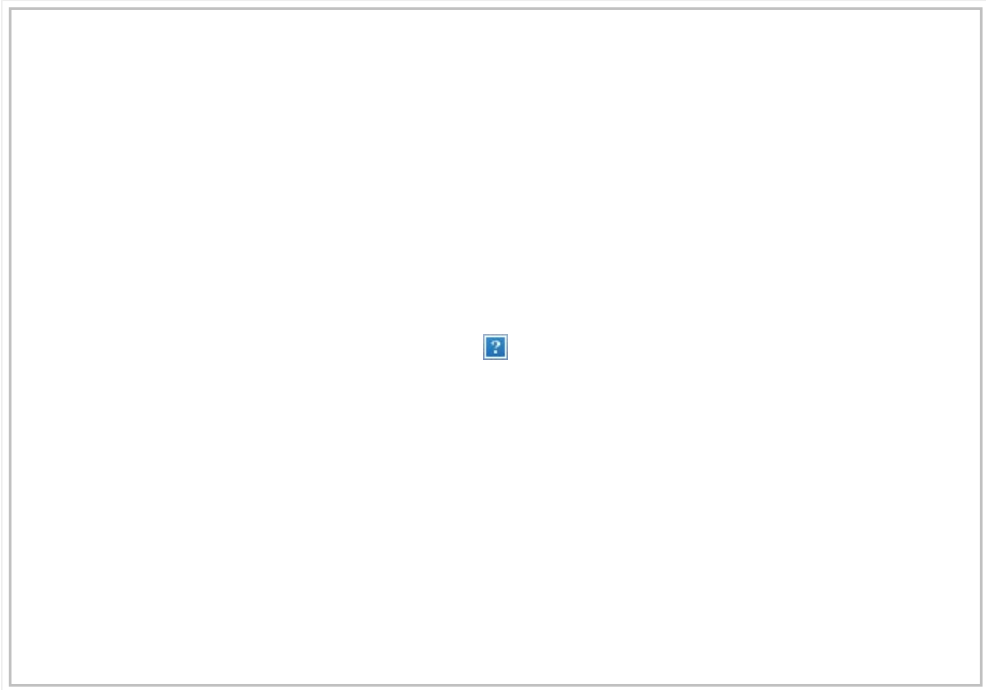
I wanted to take a moment and share a little info on HPA's Sea Turtle Research Program's work on conservation of sea turtles in the South Pacific earlier this month and the travels of our students!

On January 4th, 2020 3 students, Ali Wawner, Bayla Jefferson, and Ami Ibamoto joined Marc Rice and I for our third research expedition to the Republic of Vanuatu. As part of a three year we, working alongside Francis Hickey, Coordinator, Traditional Resource Management Program at Vanuatu Cultural Centre and Tassiriki villagers, placed satellite tags on three post-nesting hawksbill turtle on Moso Island in order to foster a better understanding of the location of their forage grounds and regional connectivity. Our last four tagged turtles went to both New Caledonia and Australia. Where will these three go? If interested, you can follow their travels in the following [blog](#).

In addition to deploying the satellite tags, we volunteered at the turtle hatchery at Moso Island's Tranquility Resort tagging and collecting tissue samples for genetic analysis. Of course, there was some down time where we were able to explore the reefs of Moso and Lelepa Islands!

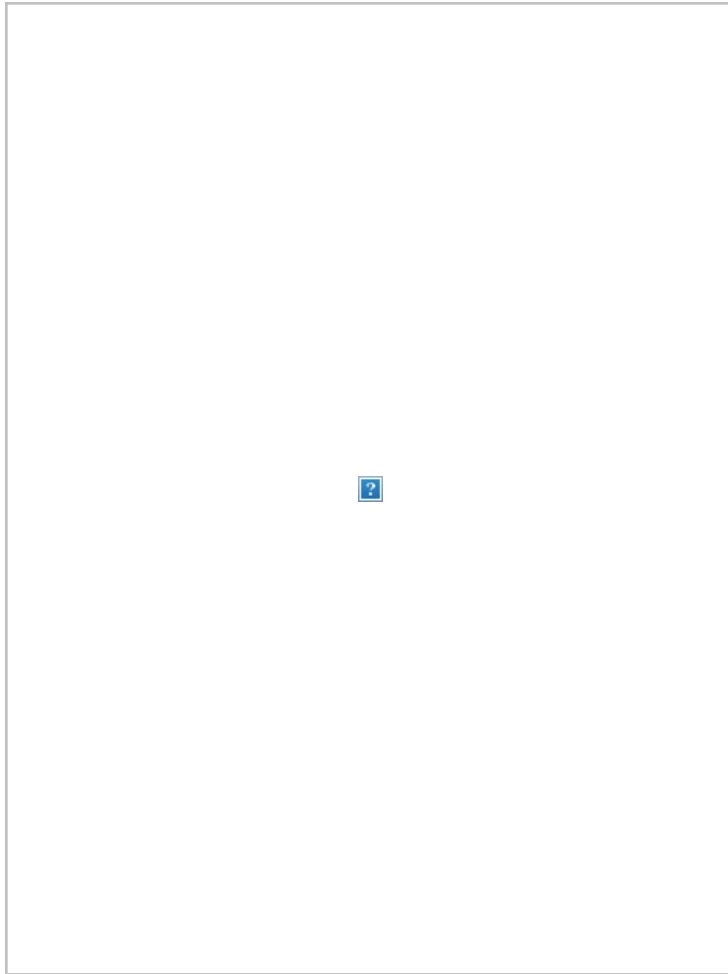
Our students represented HPA and their families so well and I am so proud to say that all three of these students are products of our Village!. The three were extremely hard working, even in challenging conditions, were very respectful of all those we worked and interacted with, and were true scientists and marine biologists exploring the natural realm. They really seemed to appreciate their time with our village hosts. "I believe that meeting/spending time with local people from the island made the experience extra special. Because we were able to do so, we were able to better connect with their culture and learn." reflected one student. In addition, all of the students really enjoyed exploring the reef system of Moso Island. "My greatest learning experience was learning about all of the different types of corals and different sea creatures that we don't see in Hawaii."

With great appreciation for our amazing students and our great school! Laura

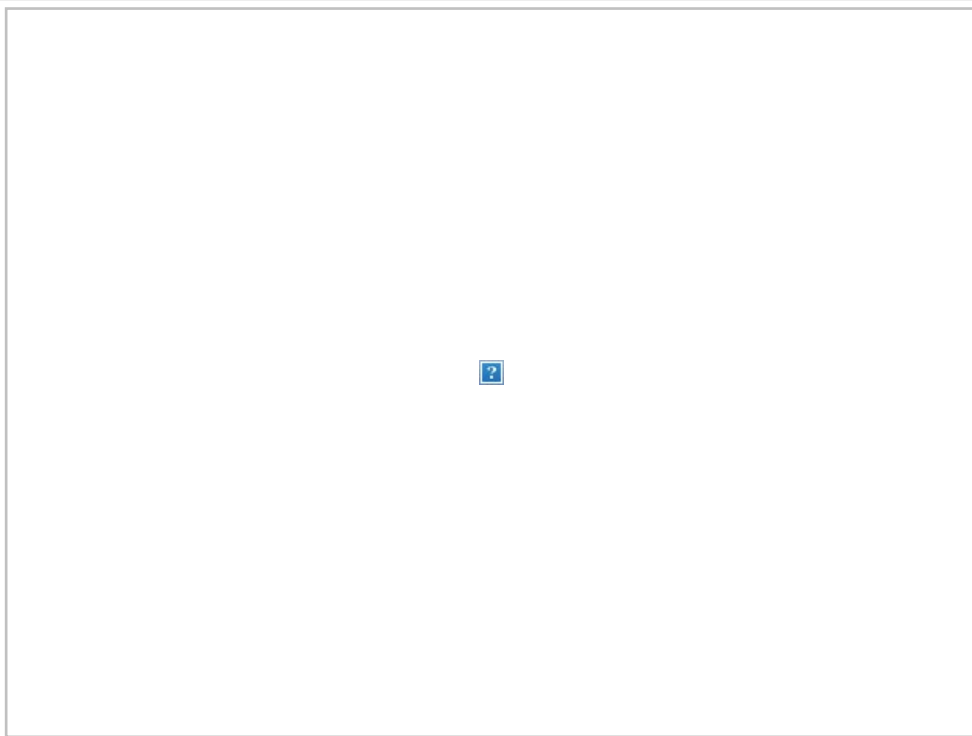


The HPA/NOAA/VANUATU team at the time of departure from Tranquility Resort, Moso Island.



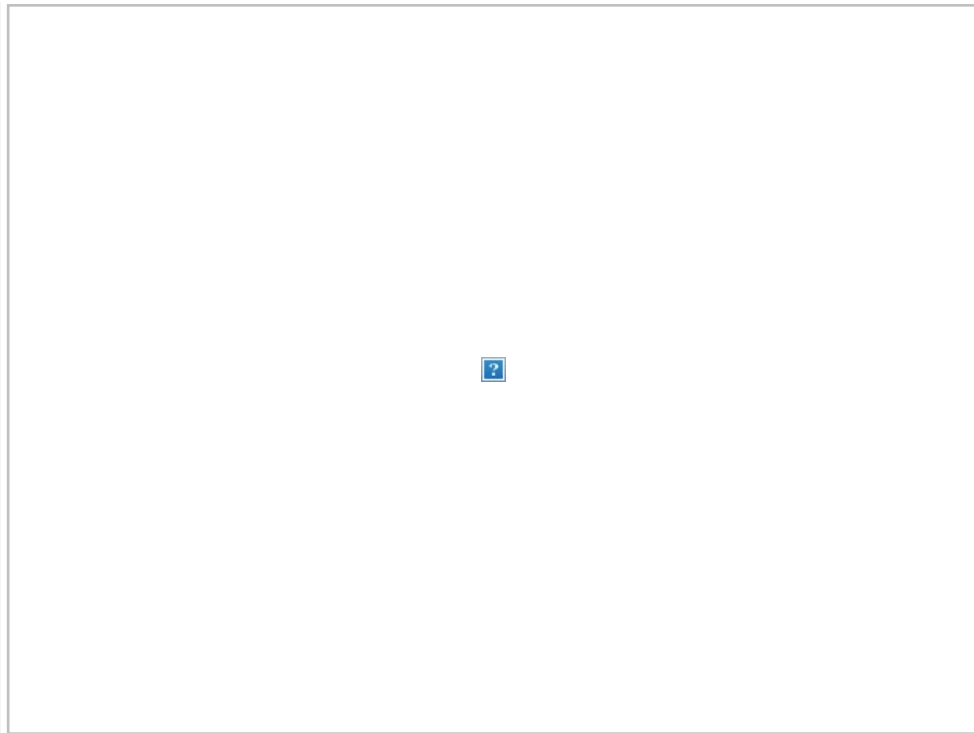


Ali, Bayla and Ami (Marama in the background) at one of the tanks with baby hatchling Hawksbills.

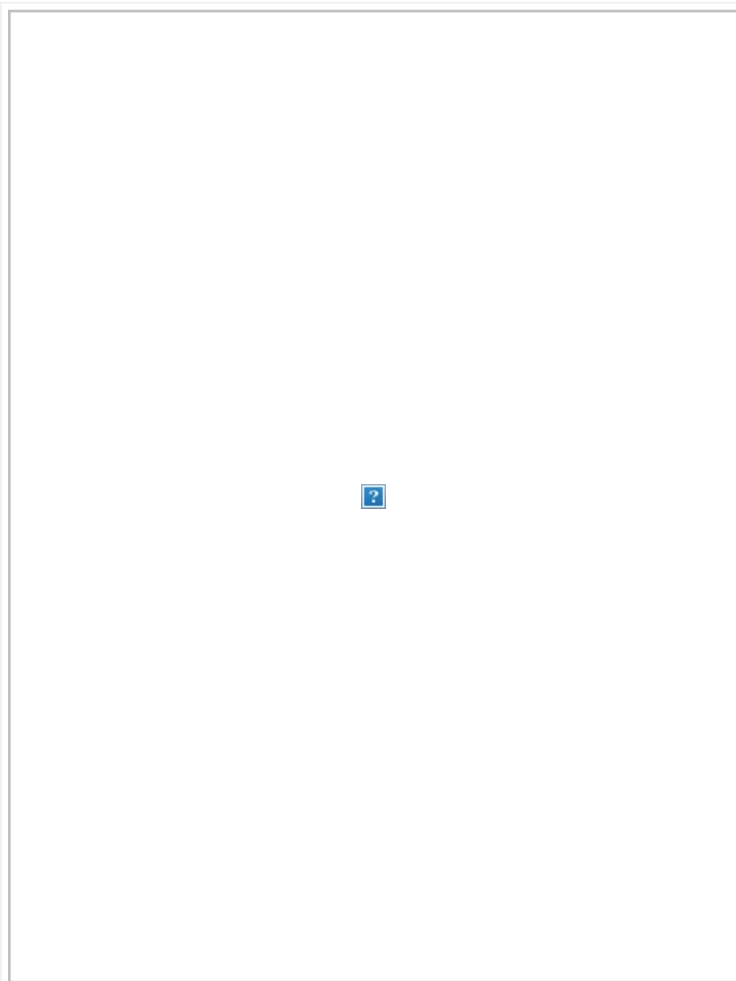


The team with our large female hawksbill turtle with the satellite tag attached... we were waiting for the fiberglass and resin to harden sufficiently so we could release her.

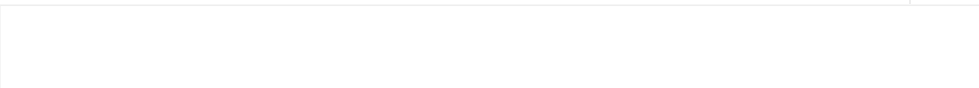


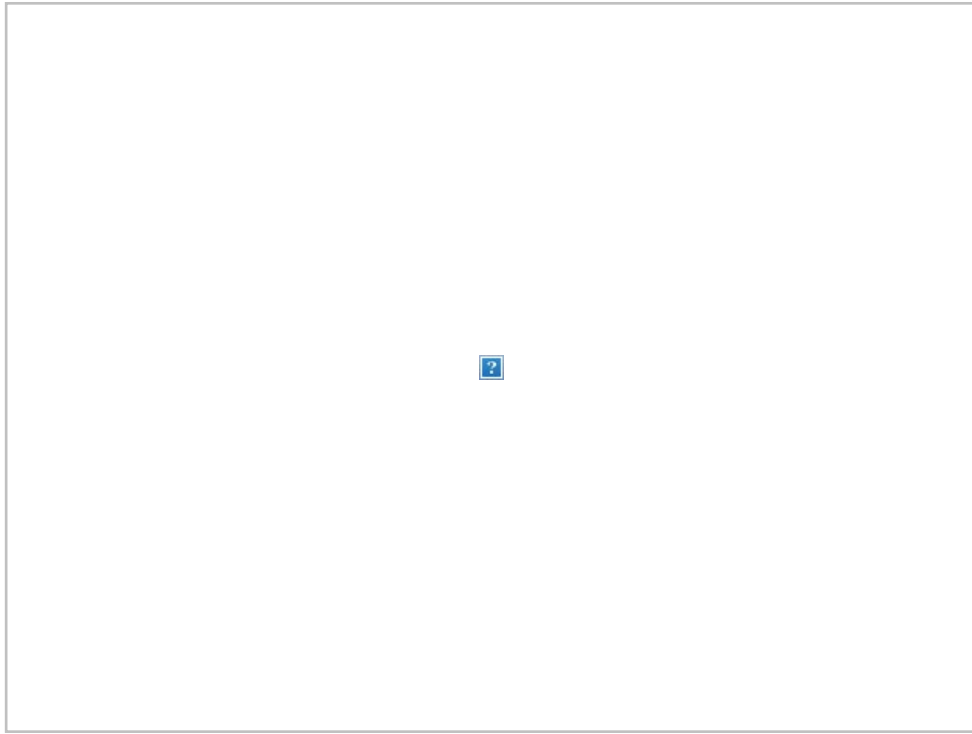


Snorkeling on the beautiful coral reef of Moso Island.

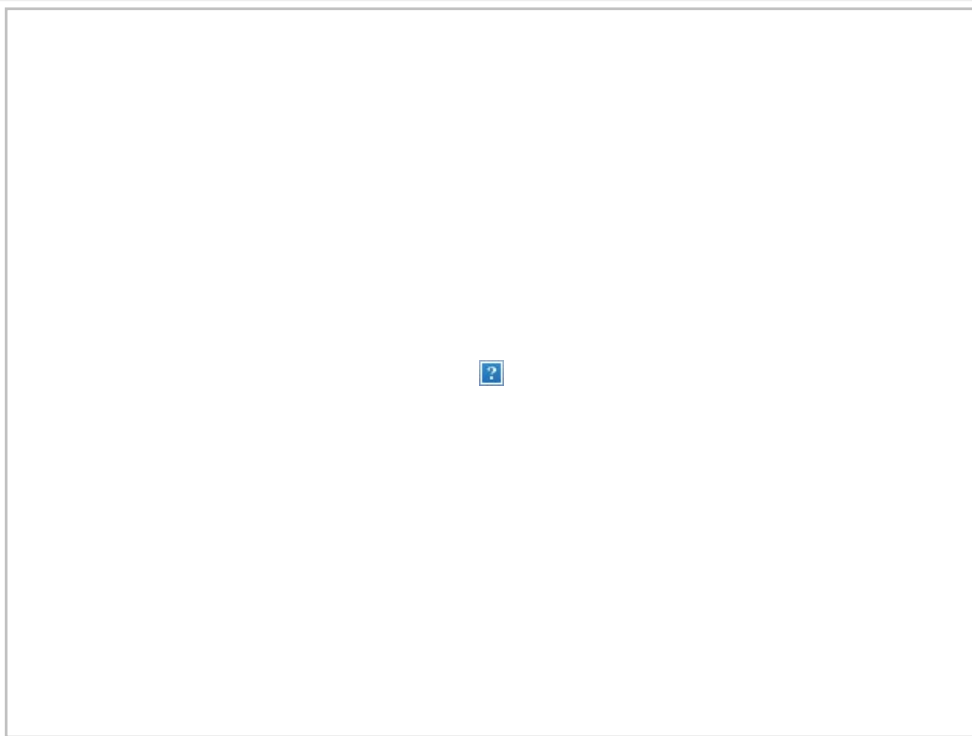


Hiking across Moso Island to visit "Fred's" beach.

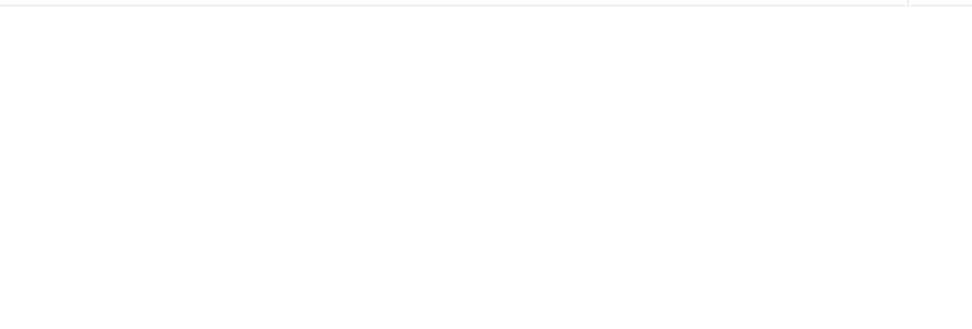


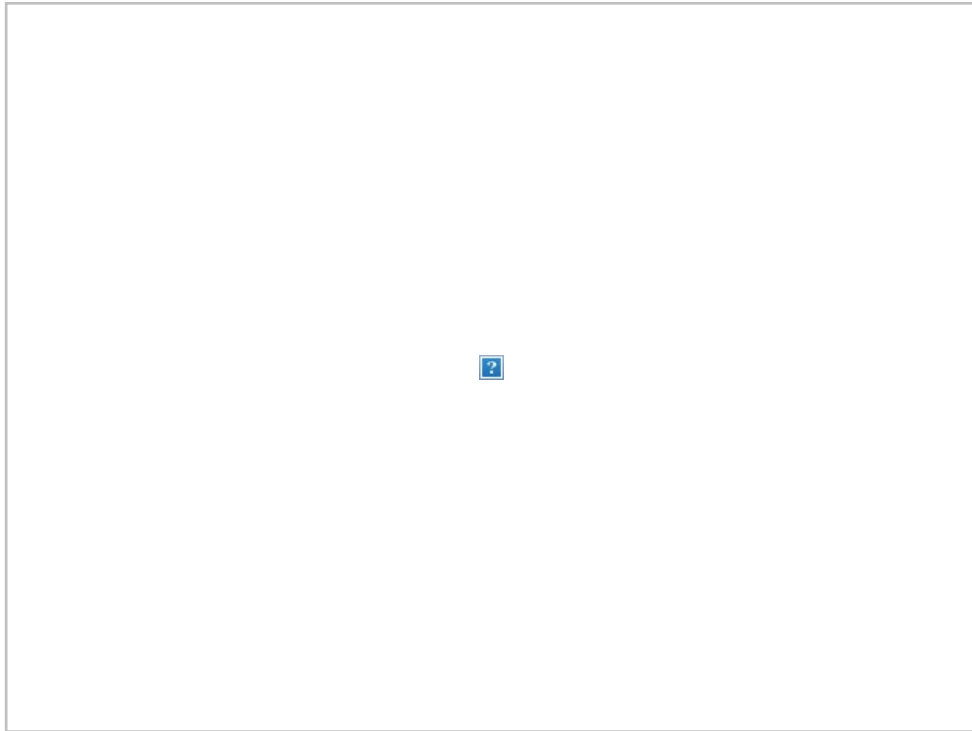


One of two scuba dives we made.

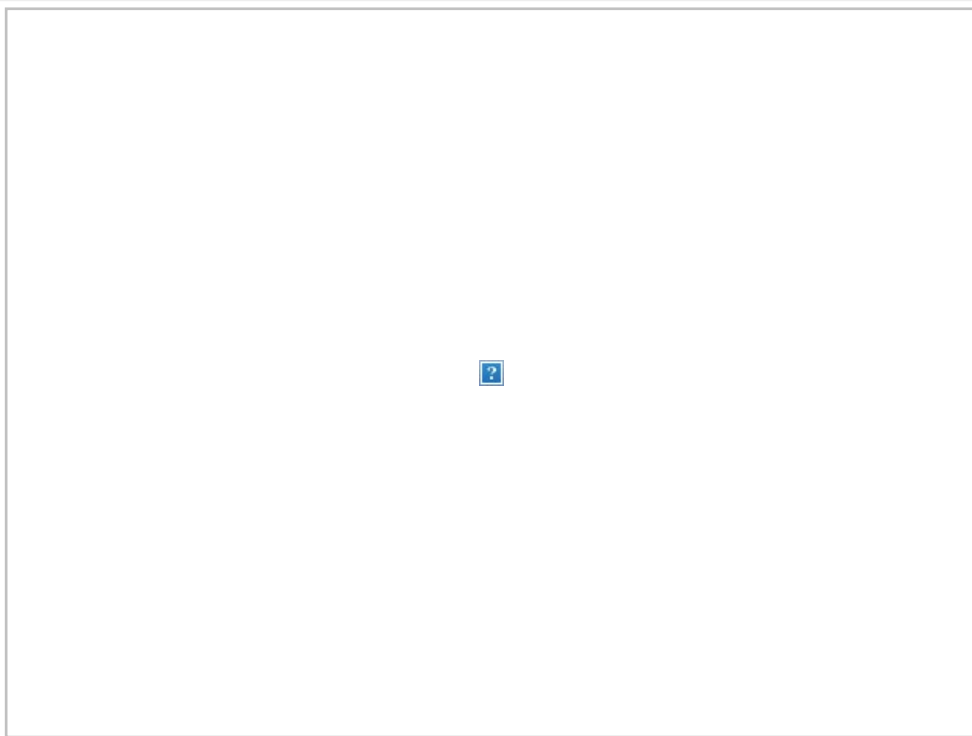


Louis (caretaker of turtles) holds a juvenile hawksbill turtle while Ali prepares a flipper for a tissue sample for DNA analysis.





In the midst of tagging our first turtle. The purple light is UV that helps to harden the polyester resin holding the tag in place.



The team off shore from Tassiriki Village after we visited to share the results of our work.

Posted by [mrice](#) at 12:19 PM No comments:



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