

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
Coconut Island • P. O. Box 1346 • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96741

November 30, 1976

Lt. Richard W. Brandes
Commanding Officer
USCG LORAN Station Marcus
FPO Seattle 93762

Dear Lt. Brandes:

I have recently been commissioned by the Hawaii State Marine Affairs Coordinator (Office of the Governor) to conduct a comprehensive three year survey and assessment of Hawaiian sea turtles. In effect, this will be an expansion of studies that have been underway since 1973 at the Hawaiian green sea turtle colonial breeding site of French Frigate Shoals. Both the Coast Guard and the Fish and Wildlife Service have supported, and continue to support, my field research at this site.

Through preliminary tagging studies of juvenile turtles (15-50 lbs.) at Midway, I have gathered evidence which suggests that Hawaiian turtles may occasionally frequent other areas of the Pacific. This past summer, a turtle originally captured with SCUBA and tagged at Midway (by the Koral Kings Dive Club) was subsequently recovered at Wake, a distance of approximately 1000 miles. Working in cooperation with Lt. j.g. Mike Blume of the Wake Island LORAN Station, I have now initiated a preliminary monitoring program whereby sightings of turtles in adjacent waters can be reported back to me for compilation and analysis.

After reviewing the appropriate charts, it seems likely to me that prevailing winds and currents alone could carry Hawaiian turtles to the waters adjacent to Marcus. In addition, there can be no question that if a turtle had desire to travel from say Midway to Marcus, it could do so easily through its own power. In August, 1974 Lt. Kevin Ray, a previous Commanding Officer on Marcus, indicated in a letter that at least some turtles are present around Marcus outside of the reef. At this time, I would therefore like to reestablish a line of communication with Marcus (through your command), and ask for your personal assistance in initiating a preliminary monitoring program. This would hopefully be accomplished through the use of the sea turtle sighting report forms which have been enclosed. Your approval of such a project and cooperation in distributing these forms to interested individuals (both Coast Guard and other Marcus personnel) would be most appreciated.

Lt. Richard W. Brandes
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I have also enclosed several publications on sea turtles which you and your men may find interesting. I very much look forward to hearing from you when your time permits.

Sincerely,

GEORGE H. BALAZS
Jr. Marine Biologist

GHB:ec

Enclosures

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
Department of Marine Biology
2005 Kaneohe Island, P. O. Box 1346, Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

December 2, 1976

Commander K. R. Miller
Executive Officer
U.S. Naval Station Midway
FPO San Francisco 96614

Dear Commander Miller:

Thank you very much for your letter of November 15th concerning the logistics of my turtle project. I had hoped to speak with you in person about this matter on December 3rd. I was originally scheduled to make a short visit to Kure by Coast Guard C-130, with an overnight stop at Midway. Unfortunately, this flight has now been postponed until December 8th, and at the present it is uncertain if the overnight stop will be at Midway or Kure.

Problems of future transportation to Midway and Kure for the most part now seem to be solved through my ready access to the biweekly Coast Guard flight. In addition, your indication of agreement to arrange entry approval for my study periods at Midway is most welcome news. The only remaining difficulty is the absence of approval to periodically travel by Navy helicopter from Kure to Midway. Without such authorization, I will be confined to Kure for two weeks at a time, or at least until the next Coast Guard flight arrives. I can foresee that this would impose a number of difficulties. Two points have recently come to my attention which perhaps may provide the avenue to gain the necessary authorization for travel on Navy helicopter. These are: 1) the attached copied letter indicating support, where feasible, from the Commandant, Headquarters, Fourteenth Naval District; and 2) an indication from Mr. Palmer Sekora of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii that my research activities at Midway will, in part, be an extension of cooperative work on turtles that is being conducted at other Leeward Refuge areas in conjunction with his Federal agency.

If our forthcoming overnight stop on the Coast Guard flight takes place at Midway, I will, of course, make contact with you shortly after arrival.

Sincerely,

GHB:ec
Encl.

GEORGE H. BALAZS
Jr. Marine Biologist