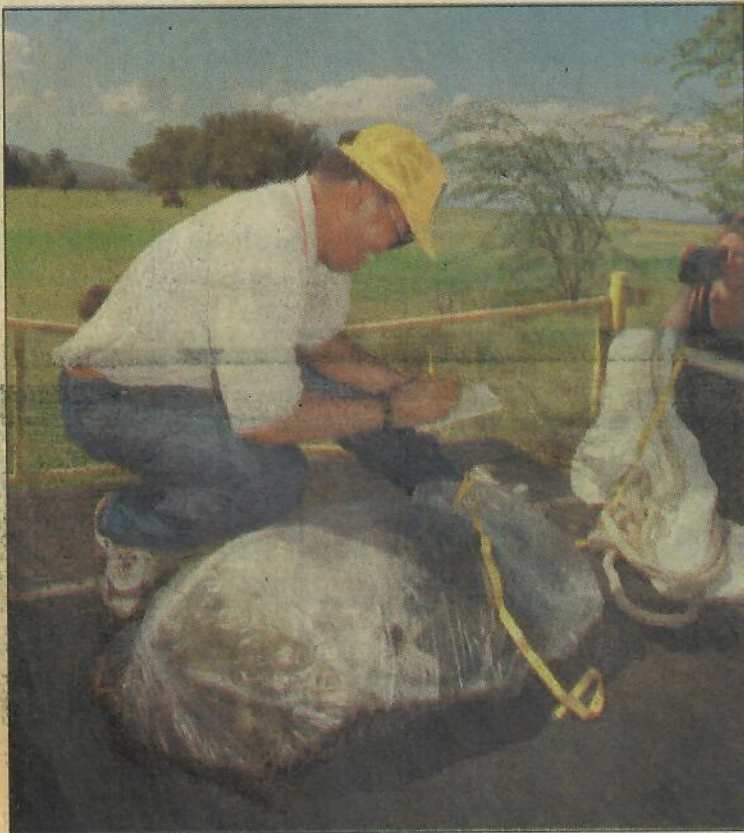
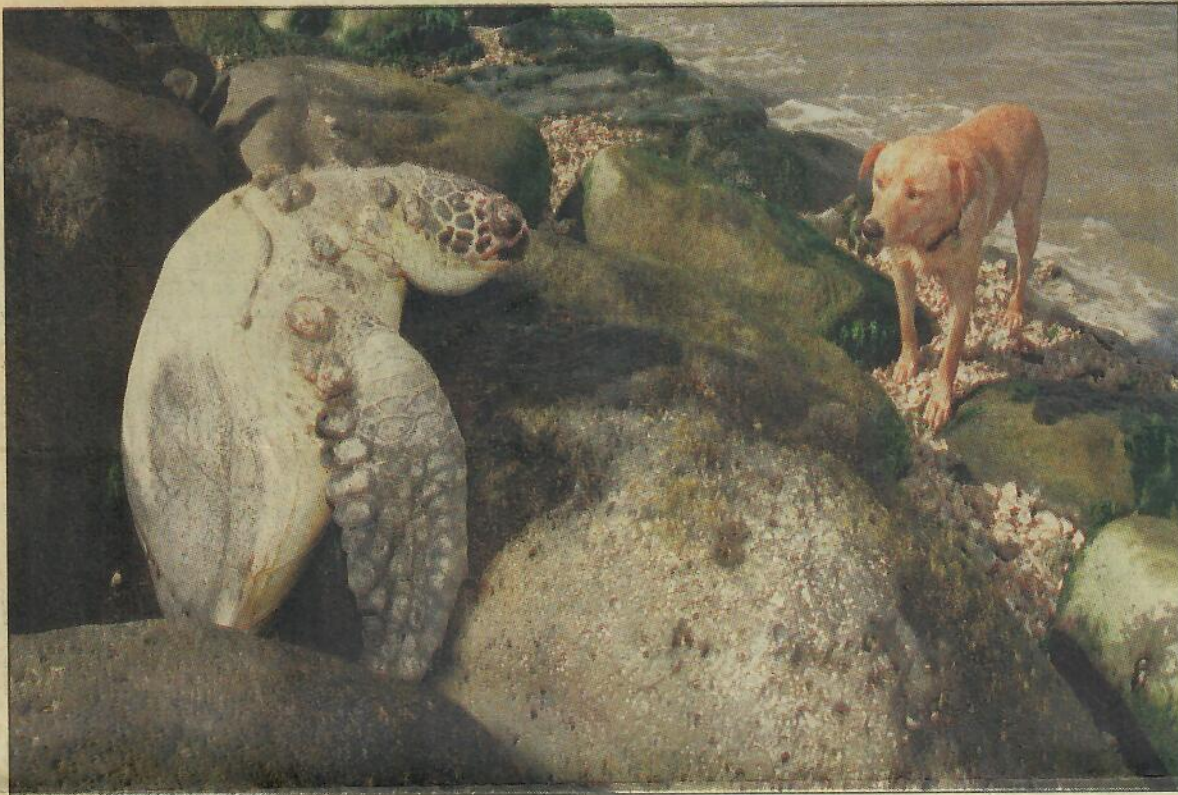


Dead turtle found; tumors probably to blame



A dead green sea turtle wedged in the rocks of the breakwall fronting Kalama Park in Kihei was inspected by Amber the dog Monday morning before it was recovered by Department of Land and Natural Resources Aquatic Biologist Skippy Hau. After transferring the turtle to his truck, Hau (photo at left) said the adult female turtle was about 20 to 25 years old, had a 31-inch carapace and bore no identifying tags. Hau said the turtle most likely died after becoming weakened by tumors that riddled its shoulders, neck and head. "They can't feed and they get weak," Hau said. The biologist added that scientists believe the tumors are caused by a virus or parasites that enter the turtles' bodies by way of open wounds. Hau said he had received calls about other turtles in distress this month, but this was his first pick-up of a dead turtle.

The Maui News/MATTHEW THAYER photos