

Of the 5 genera of sea turtles that still exist today, 1 group is on the I.U.C.N. endangered list and the remaining 4 have experienced an alarming decrease in numbers over the past 50 years.

The reasons:

Ineffective or non-existent conservation laws

Over fishing

Resort hotels and lighted roads constructed near nesting beaches

Eggs taken indiscriminately for food

The taking of females when she "hauls out" to nest

The demand for shell ornaments and whole "stuffed" animals

Will these beautiful, swift and migratory reptiles only exist as aquarium specimens in the next 50 years?

As short a time ago as the 1930s', Pacific Green Sea Turtles nested on Oahu, Kauai, Molokai and Lanai. None do today. Animals found in our waters today migrate to the Federally protected Wildlife Refuge of the Leeward Islands for reproduction. Unfortunately there are no laws protecting , in any way, this valuable breeding herd when it is around our inhabited Islands.

Would you support some form of State conservation measure to protect these animals?

I. Introduction

A. Affiliation- Interests (marine turtle biology and conservation).

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss sea turtles with your organization. Hopefully you will leave here tonight with a better understanding and appreciation of these unique animals. In addition I would hope that you will have a greater awareness of the survival difficulties that are being experienced both here in Hawaii and in other areas of the world. I also expect to gain new information tonight by learning of your diving encounters with turtles.

B. First I would like to relate to you some of the ~~research~~ activities in which I have been involved.

1. During 1973 I conducted an intensive tagging and nesting survey study at French Frigate Shoals over a 2 month period, *plan to repeat this summer,*
2. Studied populations and movements around our major Hawaiian Islands;
 - a. net-tag and release studies at big Island.
 - b. tag and release captive individuals. *Sealife Park - Aquarium*
 - c. compile and analyze catch (commercial) statistics on record since 1948.
3. Captive growth and nutrition studies at coconut island. Attempting to establish baseline data which is an essential prerequisite to any future commercial farm.
4. Recently spent 4 days at Grand Cayman Island, BWI-site of only commercial turtle farm. Visited to learn more about the interrelations of conservation and commercialization of the species-more to say on this topic later.
5. Conducted nesting area surveys in the Phoenix Islands to learn more about this little studied central pacific colony-presently an ongoing project with the assistance of personnel stationed on the islands.
6. *and of course* Active in marine turtle conservation in Hawaii-goal to make people aware of the turtle's plight and to obtain protection. In this respect, have been fortunate to have frequent contact with marine turtle specialists both in the U.S. and other countries.

First - C. What I would like to do this evening is to give you some basic background information on the biology and status of marine turtles-in order to acquaint those already not familiar.

Second - Than I would like to talk specifically about the turtle situation in the Hawaiian Archipelago *with emphasis on the French Frigate Shoals breeding grounds.*

Last Last I would like to discuss the present status of turtle farming, specifically the Grand Cayman facility and its effect of world conservation efforts. For each of these three general topics I will be showing slides to better illustrate the points we will be discussing.