

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, 32611

1965 Scientific Am. article -
NHI - nearly dead day

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

December 17, 1974

Dr. George H. Balazs
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Dear George:

Thanks ever so much for the copy of Urashima Taro. I hadn't heard of it but it's a beautiful job and I'm delighted to have it. Also it is a good source document for your investigation of the origins of the Japanese predilection for turtle shell and shells. You would be doing sea turtle conservation a service if you could get to the bottom of that trait. It is phenomenon apart, with nothing to do with the casual curio-store market; and it is one of the important depleting factors operating today. Maybe if you could document its origin and development you could better explain its repercussions both to conservationists and to the Japanese themselves.

Incidentally, in Miami I seemed to detect an urge in you to get your Hawaiian Archipelago green turtle set apart as a different, and thus preservation-worthy, taxon. This would be a constructive move, but it is not going to be easily done, and underkill (i.e. an unclinched case) could do more harm than good, so please be sure your evidence is good. All I know about Pacific turtles (except for previously published suggestions, doubted by Pritchard, that there may be two forms in some places such as Hawaii, the Galapagos and Central America) is bared in the piece I read to the group in Miami. To summarize that: There is a very different Chelonia on the Central American coast, agassizi, or agassizi plus carrinegra. It is much blacker than Atlantic mydas, with both more intense pigmentation and with pigmentation in places not pigmented in mydas. Besides that, the females have higher shells and less curving shell silhouettes from frontal view. Those are the characters and I seem to have noted them in French Frigate hatchlings (see So Excellent a Fishe, Fig. 24), in a dozen or more basking turtles on Pearl and Hermes reef, and in hatchlings from the Marshall islands. This material is obviously spotty, but please check out my impressions carefully. The job there seems to me mainly to distinguish Hawaiian

During nesting -
injury to dorsal
surface of hind limb

Fishe 2216 - basking

fish species -
agassizi?
body depth - cl ratio

Trawl nets - white turtles
duplicate slides - Kiholo Bay juveniles
- rayman shell
- stripes of greens - FFS

photos of sea life part -
aquarium turtles

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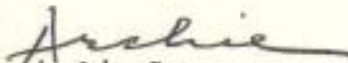
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turtles from agassizi without automatically lumping it with the Indian Ocean form. Look very carefully at the mid-Pacific turtles to see whether they are (1) two kinds, and (2) mainly a kind like the Central American, Mexican, and Galapagos kind, or (3) a demonstrably separate mid-Pacific form, differing from both Central American agassizi and the Chelonias of the Barrier Reef and the Indian Ocean (which I suspect are going to turn out different from each other when properly examined). Until that is done I am going to keep thinking of your Hawaiian population as closer to agassizi than to Atlantic mydas.

Many thanks again for the book. It was pleasant seeing you at Miami and Cayman.

Sincerely yours,



Archie Carr

Graduate Research Professor

AC/fs