

March 30, 1982

Mr. Arnold Howard
P. O. Box 4
Pahala, Hawaii 96777

Dear Arnold:

A few weeks ago I heard an interesting story that I thought I would pass on to you. On August 1st of last year a Hawaii Army National Guard helicopter was flying along the Kau Coast at low altitude when they spotted a large turtle lying on its back close to the water. They landed, turned the turtle over, and watched it crawl safely into the sea. They saw a jeep trail leading into the area, but could find no evidence of anyone around that could have been responsible for catching the turtle. The episode remained a mystery, so they left to continue on their flight.

Unfortunately, by the time this story was related to me the men could not identify the exact site. They are all from Oahu and apparently not that familiar with the Big Island. Although I can't be certain, it is probable that they were in the area of Kamehame. Do you recall hearing any reports of a helicopter landing during the first part of August? If it was at Kamehame, then perhaps the turtle had crawled up to nest and somehow fell off a low cliff onto its back. I recall your telling about a case like this several years ago. I can't imagine that someone would turn a large turtle over and then just leave it there. Any information that you can give me on this matter would certainly be appreciated.

Alan Kam is now working on a 5 month contract for the National Marine Fisheries Service. He is living in a tent on Laysan Island with another person recording information on monk seals and gurtles (but there aren't many turtles there). In about 2 months a small boat will pick them up and move them 100 miles to Lisianski Island. They will stay there another 2 months before returning to Honolulu. I gave him the dacon throw net to try and catch small turtles along the shore. Maybe he can find one that we tagged before.

Did you ever find the photo taken some years ago of Mr. Cooper's flat bed truck loaded with turtles? I would still like to have a copy.

Best regards to you and Jeanette.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist

GHB:md