

March 2, 1981

Dear George;

I was doing some investigating on the sea turtles on the island of Aunuu and found out through a fella that works for me, who lives on Aunuu, that they take about three turtles a month. From what I could gather, the biggest reason they take them is to sell pieces of shell in the market here on Tutuila, or to any tourists that happen to visit Aunuu. Also, he asked me if I would like to have a baby turtle. According to him, turtles come ashore there to lay eggs, usually on rainy nights. If I were to buy baby turtles and transport them to a remote beach on the north shore of Tutuila would they return there to lay eggs? Or, do they return to where they were born? What happens if their set free from a boat in the open ocean? How long before eggs hatch after they are layed? Can you send me some lititure on sea turtles as I cannot find anything suitable here?

While diving off the N.W. coast of Aunuu this past week end, ^{NOON} looking for bigger Abalone I came across a Hawksbill in 80' of water with a length of 4'. It's right rear flipper? foot? was much shorter than the other. Looked rather straight to be caused from a shark, maybe the prop from a boat.

Sincerely,
Terry Ferstle
Terry Ferstle

P.S. Has any organization looked into the possibility of buying baby turtles, especially in a place like this where there is ignorance of the law and no way of enforcing it? I imagine there is a high mortality rate as children can be cruel to animals, tire of the novility; ect. If I buy any babies should I do anything before I release them?

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