

7777
TAGGED 5/15/84 By GHB 4 Nov 84
SL-51.9cm at
Ponahou, Hawaii

Dear Sirs,

Today we came across
one of your tagged turtles
(# 7723) at Nihoa come on
the south of Hawaii. It
had been dead for no
more than 24 hours or so.
The throat had been cut,
but the body was in
otherwise perfect condition.
We turned him over (he
was found on his back) &
left him where we found
him. We also saw another
turtle, very large, swimming
just off shore.

Laura Craig

P.S. If you have any questions, ask my
husband —

William H. Craig
5002 Hawk Nest
San Antonio, Tx. 78250

(He's a veterinarian, but claims to have
no working knowledge of turtles!)

4 Dec. 84

Dear Mr. Balazs,

In answer to your questions
of 30 Nov. :

1. The cut was very clean
and appeared to have been made
with a sharp knife. I can't
say exactly how fresh it was,
but fairly. There was no bleeding,
but there was also no evidence
of decomposition. I would
think it was only hours old.
The cut was approximately
 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep.

2. It could possibly
have washed up. It was a
rocky area about 4 feet
from the waves. We did see
another in the water about 10-15 ft. out -
3. No photographs taken

4. The tag was left on the carcass. I did not see a tag on the other flipper.

Sorry about the photo not existing. Only a scientist would photograph dead turtles! I would say he was about 18 inches across the shell ^(carapace) and weighed about 40-50 lbs. He was in excellent condition --- no butchering, no decomposition, no marks of any kind except the cut throat. I can't remember the coloring well enough to describe it (and I don't know what the normal appearance would be anyway). Just green. He looked as if he should have been alive.

As we hiked toward the cave, a 30-ish tourist type lady waved us over. She was standing by the turtle, who

was on his back. She wanted to turn him over & return him to the water, but was afraid to touch him. My husband flipped him over. Only then did we realize he was dead. Bill turned him over again. We saw the cut throat & the tag. Bill scraped the gunge off the tag. I took the number & wrote you. We left the turtle exactly as we found him.

I have read and enjoyed the material you sent. We had a turtle experience on our trip to Cozumel last year. We were hoping to see some nesting turtles near Punta Morenos. We did not (it was a little late in the year). What we did get to see were some hatchlings. A

local resident had noticed them emerging & called the fish and game people, who made sure they made it to the ocean undisturbed. The Mexican fish & game authorities were very friendly and informative, and I learned about as much as my Spanish would allow! We had seen them patrolling the coast road all night guarding against poachers who slaughter the nesting turtles. The hatchlings we saw were Ridleys, I believe.

I know that you didn't ask to hear that turtle story, but it is curious that sea turtles seem to creep into our vacations.

I did not realize the problem here close to home.... the decline of the Kemp's Ridleys, the shrinking problem, etc.

Again, thanks for the material -
I've learned something, and in
the future I'll be more aware
of the sea turtle situation.

I hope we have been of
some help. I know the
critters need all the assistance
they can get. I am the last
in a long line of rural people,
hunters and conservationists. San
Antonio is a sunbelt growth city
with a population of over a
million in the metropolitan area.
As the city grows, the wildlife
is displaced. I see it daily---
the deer, racoons, bobcat, etc...
and I've wondered what can
be done. Maybe it's time I
found out ---

Laura Craig

Laura Craig
5002 Hawk Nest
San Antonio, Tx.



George H. Baloge
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin.