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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
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6 November 1992

F/SWC2:GWB

MEMORANDUM FOR: F/SW - Gary Matlock
FROM: F/SWC2 - George Boehlert *George Boehlert*
SUBJECT: Turtle Stranding

During your September visit to Honolulu Laboratory, you asked if there were currently "management-related" activities that might be appropriate for the Region to take over. I mentioned at the time that sea turtle stranding was one such activity. We have never had the staff to see to the strandings properly, and it has been done as an ad hoc activity. Until about one year ago, we had covered it on workdays and the State DLNR's DOCARE agents had covered nights and weekends. Their coverage decreased until Honolulu Laboratory staff were spending a lot of personal time on weekends in an effort to avoid bad press for the National Marine Fisheries Service. We sought some formalization of State participation after Charles Karnella recommended examining ESA Section 6 agreements with the State. George Balazs, Gene Nitta, and I met with Bill Paty and representatives of DOCARE and HDAR last spring to examine developing an agreement (using a draft MOU supplied by F/PR), but they were not interested; I attach a copy of my letter written after the meeting and the response from DLNR.

We are now at the point where the State seems to have little or no desire to cooperate. As a fall-back, George Balazs has developed a contract (copy attached). We may have more bidders, but know that at least the University of Hawaii's Marine Option Program will bid. It covers only nights and weekends. We will attempt this for a 6 month trial at a cost of \$4k (their experience over this period will determine a better estimate of cost). Unfortunately, we have no funds to extend the contract beyond this period.

Obviously any assistance from the Region would be helpful. While weekday stranding assistance would be useful, we are willing to continue covering this time if existing personnel support levels continue. For nights and weekends, however, we would appreciate any attempts you might make to secure funding to continue the attached contract beyond the middle of FY 1993. The cost is a real pittance compared to the costs in the SEFSC. I attach a brief summary of how they handle turtle strandings. Their programs provide significant support to the states. Given that



strandings have become quite visible in Hawaii, and often emotionally charged by public outcry, perhaps a similar approach, with funding from F/PR, would be appropriate.

Attachments

cc: F/ SWC - R. Neal

MFT

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-93)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages - 2

To <i>George Boehlert</i>	From <i>Richard Neal</i>
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Michael F. Tillman
 Southwest Science and Research Director

FROM: *Robyn R. M. Jones*
 for Gary Matlock
 Acting Regional Director

SUBJECT: Turtle Stranding Activity

Please accept my apology for being so tardy in responding to your memo of August 18, 1993, concerning turtle stranding activity. I have not ignored your memo. Instead, I have been considering how best to address the policy issues of who should be doing what, who should pay, and how to do so within the expected FY 94 budget.

You may recall that during our discussions on July 21, 1993, I indicated that this was a topic I had discussed last year with Dick Neal and George Boehlert and that I told them and you that disposing of stranded animals seemed to be an appropriate management function. (You may want to review George's memo to me on this subject in about August 1992, I think). However, any research done on these animals was appropriately a Center function. It was my understanding that both activities commonly occurred on some animals. I do not recall any further communication, advice, or recommendations on this topic until your August 18 memo; other than to be advised that the Honolulu Laboratory was letting a contract for a six-month trial period with the State of Hawaii. However, I have repeatedly indicated that one of Jim McCallum's duties was to examine this topic, in conjunction with the laboratory, for improving the way we did business.

Nov 92

I had intended to discuss this subject with Jim McCallum in Honolulu at the September 1993 Western Pacific Council meeting. But, I just ran out of time.

I realize that the brief history above doesn't help much now. But, it is important that no one thinks I unilaterally decided that regional operations would assume all of the duties associated with turtle strandings.

Please allow me to respond to your two questions of August 18. I do not recall ever committing to paying for the contract at the end of the "six-month trial." I am unable to extend or renew the contract previously issued by the Honolulu Laboratory.



The regional operations budget is no healthier than the Center's budget. So, the disposition of stranded turtles will have to be handled by Pacific Area Office (PAO). We will rely on the Honolulu Laboratory staff to continue to perform the actions outlined in your August 18 memo on both weekdays and weekends. As I am sure you will agree, PAO will not assume the research responsibilities of the laboratory.

By way of this memo, I am directing Jim McCallum to conduct a thorough review of this topic and to provide recommendations to me and you for a short- and long-term resolution of the issue. That report will be due by December 1, 1993. (For example, a Quick Reaction Grant application might be appropriate). I would appreciate your staff assisting Jim in this effort.

CC:
Jim McCallum
Jim Lecky