

Park program disease-free

The green sea turtles at Sea Life Park are, so far, free of the diseases that causes large tumors to grow on their bodies.

The park's captive turtle population is made up of animals collected before turtles were declared endangered, and the offspring of those animals. They are kept apart from the wild turtles that occasionally are brought to the facility.

The turtles produce eggs regularly. They are hatched and most of the hatchlings are immediately released.

Some are raised for release when their shell lengths are 1 to 1½ feet and the animals are 2 to 3 years old. Scientists know very little about the survival rates of hatchlings, and believe older turtles have a much higher chance of making it.

Green sea turtles are believed to do quite a bit of ocean traveling during their lives, but some of the captive animals are collecting frequent flier miles.

The most recent group of these reptilian air travelers arrived earlier this year after a stay at the Vancouver Aquarium. Following a period of readjustment to Hawaii conditions, they were to be released, probably in the relatively disease-free waters off the Kohala coast.

— Jan TenBruggencate

4-12-1992
SUNDAY STAR-
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