

Summary of Significant Information Relating to
Marine Turtle Regulation 36

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1. Three types of marine turtles are found in Hawaii; two are on the Endangered Species List (hawksbill and leatherback) and one (green) is officially listed throughout the world as "depleted."
2. Hawaii has the largest and last remaining green turtle colony in the United States.
3. No State laws presently exist to protect or perpetuate Hawaii's turtles.
4. Many countries and States are already aware of the threatened status of marine turtles and have implemented conservation measures.
5. Within recent history nesting took place on several of the major Islands, however the only nesting site left today is at French Frigate Shoals (approximately 480 miles NW of Honolulu).
6. Three prominent marine turtle biologists have expressed great concern for our unique turtle colony.
7. Recent intensive research at French Frigate Shoals has shown the total green turtle breeding population to be less than 1,100 individuals. An earlier estimate made in 1968 placed the size at between 2,600 and 5,200 animals.
8. Green turtles reach sexual maturity when they are between 33 and 36 inches (mean wt. 210 lbs) straight line upper shell length. Nesting green turtles at French Frigate Shoals ranged from 33 to 41 inches.
9. Studies on turtle catch statistics revealed that: 1) extremely large increases have occurred in pounds of turtle caught over the past ten years; this appears to have followed increases in tourism; 2) the mean weights of turtles taken is significantly below the size at which sexual maturity occurs (107 vs 210 lbs); 3) during 1972 only six people in the entire State hunted turtles for profit; the most earned by any one person was \$5,003.
10. Hawaiian turtles will continue to be subjected to increases in exploitation during coming years unless the personal gain incentive is removed.
11. Based on all available information, it is highly unlikely that Hawaii's green turtle colony can remain viable if the present exploitative pressures are allowed to continue.