

Grant



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION

Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Sept. 14, 1978

Dear Alison,

Likiep

I just got back from a trip to the northern atolls of the Marshalls (Ailuk, Taka, Uterik, Bikar, and Taongi) and saw something that disturbs me quite a bit. Snorkeling around these lagoons, I saw numerous empty tridacna clam shells of various (at least 2) species. Besides local people harvesting them, we are also having problems with foreign fishing vessels illegally entering lagoons and removing the abductor muscles. In any case, literally hundreds of empty shells laid on the bottom of the reefs I visited. These animals simply lay on the sand and coral and are quite easy to reach. They appear to have no defense against predators like humans except for those with imposing weight. They can very easily be overexploited as they are in Majuro and Arno. While it would be very difficult to prevent locals from gathering them for food, we can certainly try to point out the consequences of over harvesting.

What you can do for me to send me information concerning growth rate, minimum number of animals in a certain area to ensure regeneration, etc., etc. I am planning to print a pamphlet in the vernacular concerning these organisms in an attempt to inform the local people. I don't think passing legislation prohibiting the taking of the clams to have much effect. Perhaps an "awareness" program would be more beneficial. Any chance of borrowing some 16mm film on the subject? I can get the local TV station to broadcast it at no charge.

Bikar and Taongi were the highlight of the trip. These are the northernmost atolls in the Marshalls and thus very seldomly visited. It was quite an experience... watching turtles lay eggs, sharks in ankle deep water, birds ignorant of humans, etc. We even managed to capture a couple of boobies with U.S. Fish and Wildlife bands which we duly reported. Wished you were there to enjoy it as much as I did.

Anyway, any help you can provide I will certainly appreciate. Thanks.

Bill

Ministry
Pamphlet

University of Hawaii at Manoa

Graduate Division and Research Administration

MEMORANDUM

September 18, 1978

TO: George Balazs
HIMB - Coconut Island

FROM: E. Alison Kay *E. Alison Kay*

SUBJECT: Turtles in the Marshall Islands

The attached letter is from William (Bill) Puleloa, Fisheries Officer in Majuro. Bill has the M.A. in Pacific Islands Studies from UH and was in the Education Department on Majuro for about five years before becoming Fisheries Officer. I thought his comments on turtles might be of interest. If you want more information, I'm sure a note to him would produce it.

attachment



MID-PACIFIC MARINE LABORATORY
ENEWETAK ATOLL, MARSHALL ISLANDS

Supported by
UNITED STATES ENERGY RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

October 16, 1978

Mr. William Puleloa
Marine Resources Division
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Bill:

Alison Kay sent me a copy of your letter to her dated Sept. 14th. Predation on giant clams seems to be a serious problem throughout Micronesia. Enforcement of rules would seem to be impossible, and therefore I agree completely that an "awareness" program is the best bet.

We have developed a natural history audio-slide show aimed at the military now cleaning up the radioactive debris at Enewetak. It has a conservation plea in it stressing the fragile nature of the ecological balance of an atoll. The presentation is visually pleasing and the narration is simple and direct.

If you think this would be useful to you, I could loan you a show. You would need a carousel slide projector and a cassette tape recorder. I believe you could transfer portions of it to video tape to be used from time to time on TV.

I am passing your letter along to Dr. Robert Johannes. He is extremely interested in atoll fisheries and may be able to make some suggestions. Perhaps you met him during his recent visit to Majuro.

Sincerely,

ERNST S. REESE
Director

ESR:ec

cc: Dr. E. Alison Kay
✓ Dr. Robert Johannes

*Bob - Perhaps you
met him? You may wish
to write him. These people
need encouragement.*

-Ernie