

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF THE JUNE 1979 SEA GRANT FIELD STUDY

AT FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS

by

George H. Balazs

1. Nesting activity on East Island (FFS) was intensively monitored for 13 consecutive nights to obtain a reliable estimate of the size of the 1979 Hawaiian green turtle breeding assemblage. Approximately 100 adult females were found to be using this island, while approximately 80 females were using the other nesting islands of Whale-Skate, Trig, Tern, Little Gin, and Gin.
2. Of the 13 previous tagged adult females encountered, 11 were found to have been tagged in 1977, thereby displaying a two-year breeding cycle.
3. An immature green turtle tagged in 1976 at FFS was recaptured with a scoop net from the same inshore feeding pasture near East Island. Growth rate during this three year period averaged only .04 cm per month.
4. Two adult turtles fitted with depth meters were found to not exceeded depths of 20 and 42 feet, respectively.
5. Deep body (cloaca) temperatures were measured for six adult turtles basking ashore during the daytime. The maximum temperature recorded was 30.7°C; ambient seawater temperature was 26.9°C.