

A proposal to enhance the protection of sea turtles in coastal waters of federally
controlled lands in the Hawaiian Islands

by

George H. Balazs
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Not all residents and visitors in the Hawaiian Islands are aware of the full protection that is legally afforded sea turtles under the U. S. Endangered Species Act. The absence of knowledge on this subject is known to account for the periodic harassment and killing of turtles in coastal waters, and the failure of individuals to report intentional violations to enforcement authorities when they are observed taking place. A need therefore exists to increase the public's awareness of the existing federal laws protecting sea turtles and the agencies responsible for their enforcement. Such action would result in the direct enhancement of sea turtle populations in the Hawaiian Islands.

An effective and relatively inexpensive method of accomplishing this objective would be to place appropriately worded, permanent signs of an educational nature at key locations along recreational beaches and other coastal areas. With funding and technical assistance from the National Marine Fisheries Service, this management oriented conservation project could be initiated on federally-controlled lands, such as at Bellows Air Force Station, Barbers Point Naval Air Station, Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station, Barking Sands (Kauai), and Smugglers Cove (Kahoolawe). The federal agencies responsible for these areas would probably not be able to contribute any direct financial support, however, they could be expected to be receptive to such an idea and cooperate fully in the project's implementation.

At a later date, the National Marine Fisheries Service could explore the possibility of implementing a similar cooperative project for coastal areas controlled by the Hawaii state and county governments.