

NARS NOTES - Oahu



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Kaala - The NARS crew has been busy controlling blackberry with the help of volunteers, and chasing a herd of feral goats who have been eating their way through portions of the reserve. Special permits are allowing public hunters to assist with the goat removal.

Pahole - Weed control continues in Pahole, and the crew is making impressive strides toward restoration of the native forest. John Innes, research biologist with the New Zealand Department of Conservation, visited Pahole in January and later wrote that it was the most impressive project he had seen on his trip to our State. This compliment is no accident, but the result of many long hours by the Oahu NARS crew spent meticulously removing weeds while leaving native plant species intact. Zen and the art of weed control—we're working on the 20 year plan. Pigs have been kept under control thanks to the efforts of the Oahu Pig Hunters Association and other non-affiliated public hunters.

Kaena - Wanted: A trap for vandals. Through persistent trapping and vehicle control efforts, the Kaena Point Laysan albatross nesting effort went from one chick last season to four chicks this year. Cats and mongooses were kept in control through a live trapping program, but no traps were available for the most dangerous predator of all—Man. Of the four chicks in the reserve, three have been killed by vandals, plus one of the chicks' parents. Although the crew is angry and saddened by this senseless slaughter, our hope is to get one bird airborne this summer and hope for a renewed effort by the birds next November. And more appreciation for our native birds by this year's vandals.



Turtle CPR

Skippy Hau, Aquatic Biologist
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Ordinarily, we go about our day-to-day business without taking the time to consider the things that we accomplish. We usually have a lot more paperwork and emergencies than the eight-hour work day or 40-hour work week will accommodate.

This is just a simple turtle story which I thought people might like to hear about. The time was just after 7:00 pm on January 21, 1993. DOCARE Enforcement Officer Stanley Okamoto brought a turtle, which appeared to have drowned, to my house. He had recovered it from a gill net in Kahului Harbor. Stanley wanted me to confirm the identification of the turtle. Upon inspection, I determined that it was a green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).

The small 20-pound turtle was limp. It appeared to have drowned while tangled in the net. I turned the turtle upside down and allowed water to flow from its mouth. Although it appeared dead, I held the turtle upside down and applied pressure to its ventral shell—slightly modified compressions similar to what you're taught in CPR classes for young children or infants. After what seemed to be about ten or fifteen minutes of trying to resuscitate the animal through applying pressure to the animal's dorsal and ventral shell, it gasped for a breath of air.

Although still limp, I let the head droop while the rest of its body was propped on the tailgate of the truck. I continued to pump more water out of the turtle. While holding the turtle's front flippers, the animal seemed to be half conscious. Some life had returned to the animal. Stanley left the turtle with me overnight for observation.

My next decision was where to leave the turtle. I propped the turtle head down on the shower floor for the night. After a couple of hours, the animal appeared to be revived, but weak. Later that night, I could hear the container which I had propped the turtle on, moving around. The turtle appeared much stronger and was crawling around. I turned the bathroom light off. In the dark, the turtle seemed to calm down and reduce its activity.

The next morning, I could hardly believe this was the same animal. The flippers were strong and its head was propped up on its own. I was able to

do a better examination of the animal. The turtle appeared to have recovered from an earlier injury that left a noticeable notch in the right part of the shell on the third scute from its tail. The turtle weighed 21 pounds (according to my bathroom scale). The curved carapace length measured 43 centimeters. The turtle had no tumors or other visible injuries. With the help of John Cumming and Meyer Ueoka (DOFAW Wildlife Biologists), the turtle was tagged and released near the Kahului Harbor breakwater.

About eighteen months ago, my partner Brooks Tamaye (DAR Information Specialist), Randy Honebrink (Education Coordinator) and I excavated a hawksbill turtle nest on the south shore and released eleven hatchlings. Could this be one of the turtles from that nest? Although we know the odds of probability are against it, as field biologists, we get to dream that we might have made a difference in the survival of one or more animals. I guess that is probably why a lot of us are still biologists and why people still go to Las Vegas—to beat the odds.

This turtle, I believe, has again beaten the odds and survived another adventure which we got to be a part of. In a way, we hope never to see or hear about this turtle again.