

March 6, 1974

Mr. Chick Durbin
Hilo Marine Options Program
Life Science 21
University of Hawaii, Hilo
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Dear Mr. Durbin:

Donna Noborikawa has suggested that I contact you in reference to information concerning Waiaka ilio Bay which is located approximately 3 miles north of Kawaihae Harbor. My interest in this area stems from unsubstantiated reports that during certain times of the year marine turtles are plentiful. As you are probably aware, I have been conducting studies on the life history of the green turtle in the Hawaiian Archipelago. In addition, efforts are underway to obtain some form of meaningful protection for these animals as considerable information now exists to suggest that depletion has and continues to occur. If you or any of the MOP students can provide specifics on Waiaka ilio, I would be most appreciative. If in fact turtles are abundant at this site, due to algae and/or other factors, it might be wise to keep the information semi-confidential. Last year we used the vessel VALIANT MAID to engage in turtle tagging activities (with nets) along the South Kohala coast. I subsequently learned that a big Island turtle fisherman monitored our progress and returned to "harvest" animals at our best locations. I certainly wouldn't want this to be the case for Waiaka ilio should it be a productive site.

I have enclosed several articles on marine turtles which your MOP students may find interesting. I would be most anxious to communicate with individuals who are interested in turtles and, in particular, would be motivated to carry out field work. Additional data are needed on 1) areas most commonly frequented by turtles 2) former (or present) nesting beaches 3) types of algae eaten 4) frequency of both sport and commercial turtle fishing 5) restaurants and hotels selling turtle and 6) size distribution. A great deal of knowledge could probably be gathered by talking with older residents who have fished in Hawaii for a number of years. In this respect a portion of the surveys would

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actually be more sociological than biological. In any event, interesting projects could be formulated provided that the student interest is present. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance for any information or assistance you are able to provide.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Jr. Marine Biologist

GHB:ah

cc: Kelvin Char
Donna Noborikawa