



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center
Honolulu Laboratory
P. O. Box 3830
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812
March 10, 1986 F/SWC2:GHB

Captain Patrick A. Fallon
Commander, Bellows Air Force Station
P. O. Box 1010
Waimanalo, HI 96795

Dear Captain Fallon:

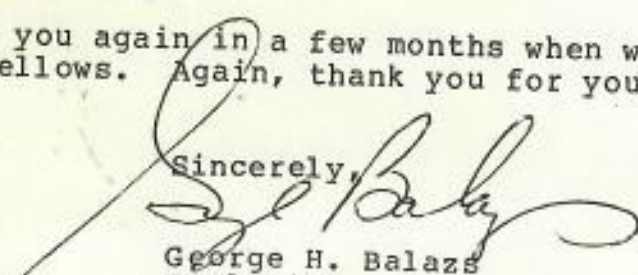
I am writing to provide you with a brief summary of the results of our work at Bellows last Wednesday night, March 5.

Our net was set near the jetty for a 14-h period extending throughout the night. We were able to catch one green turtle, but at sunrise we saw several others in the immediate area. I believe that the glassy ocean conditions, with almost no swell present, aided these turtles in seeing and avoiding our net. Nevertheless, the single turtle that was captured resulted in the collection of valuable data on growth and site fixity to a foraging pasture. The turtle had been originally captured and tagged at this same location in May of 1979. In May of 1980 it was captured there again. Since that time, it had grown from 50.5 to 59.1 cm in carapace (shell) length, or about 1.5 cm (5/8 inch) per year. The turtle is still not large enough to be mature, so we are unable to say if it is a male or a female. The mean carapace length of mature female green turtles in Hawaii is about 92 cm (36 inches). When mature, green turtles in Hawaii migrate several hundred miles to the northwest of Oahu where they mate and lay eggs at French Frigate Shoals. When the breeding season is completed, they return to their resident coastal foraging pasture (such as Bellows).

Our work at Bellows always attracts the attention of beach-goers and various people staying in your guest cottages. I am impressed with the high level of interest displayed, and the great relief demonstrated, when people learn that the turtles we have caught will return to the sea after tagging. Most people that talk to us at Bellows are very concerned about the welfare of the turtles, and are eager to learn more about them. This time I had a lady come to me that was upset over a turtle that had been accidentally hooked the previous day by a fisherman on the jetty. The turtle escaped after breaking the line. I mentioned this continuing problem to you in my last letter.

I will be contacting you again in a few months when we are ready to do more work at Bellows. Again, thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,


George H. Balazs
Zoologist