

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, 32611

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARTRAM HALL
904-392-1107

February 13, 1980

Mr. William Bolger
Postmaster General
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Mr. Bolger:

I am writing to ask your committee to consider four species of marine turtles that occur in the United States as themes for a commemorative stamp issue. All of these unique reptiles are experiencing serious survival problems and are all protected under the United States Endangered Species Act.

Under the auspices of the United States State Department and a large number of conservation organizations, the United States was recently host to an International Symposium on Sea Turtle Conservation, attended by delegates from over 40 countries. One of the goals defined by the Scientific Committee of that conference was to increase public awareness of the survival status of, and principal threats to, existing populations of marine turtles. A commemorative stamp issue would contribute significantly to this end.

The names of species nominated, along with brief descriptions, are listed as follows:

1. Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) - Once called the most valuable reptile in the world and formerly abundant in Florida and Texas, green turtle populations have drastically declined there and elsewhere in the world. Very recently the small Florida nesting colony, the only one in mainland U.S., appears to have increased slightly.

2. Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) - The loggerhead breeds farther north than any other sea turtle. In the U.S. its nesting shores extend from Florida to North Carolina, and those in Florida, from Jupiter Island to Cape Canaveral, are the most populous in the world.

3. Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) - This is the most tropical of the sea turtles. It nests singly or in little groups over an extensive tropical range. It is fairly numerous in reefs off southeastern Florida and the Keys. The price to which tortoiseshell has risen--up to \$80 a pound or more--threatens the species with extinction.

4. Kemp's Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempi*) - One of the most clearly endangered vertebrate animals still alive. Its breeding colony in Mexico, once numbering up to 40,000, has dwindled to only a few hundred. It was until lately quite abundant in waters of the southern United States. During the past two years, a number of U.S. and Mexican agencies have been engaged in an emergency program to save the ridley.

Mr. William Bolger
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During previous years several foreign countries have issued stamps portraying marine turtles. I enclose examples of several of these, and believe you'll agree that attractive artistry can be achieved with such subject matter.

I would be pleased to provide you with any additional information that might be needed in making an evaluation of this for a commemorative stamp featuring sea turtles.

Sincerely yours,

Archie Carr
Archie Carr

Graduate Research Professor

Chairman, IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle
Specialist Group

AC:ljw

Enclosures



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260

Thank you for sending us your recent suggestion for the subject of a new United States postal issue.

You are one of several thousand persons who suggest stamp subjects each year, and we try to make sure that each understands how our subject selection process works. All suggestions are reviewed by the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, whose members are selected by the Postmaster General according to their specialized knowledge. The Committee is made up of non-postal personnel -- artists, historians, writers, educators, stamp collectors and a representative of the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing, where most U. S. issues are manufactured. The Committee selects, for an average year, 15 subjects to be developed fully and presented for consideration to the Postmaster General. Because of the time required to print and distribute new issues, the Committee makes its recommendations about two years in advance of the proposed date of issuance. The Committee has completed the 1980 program and is now working on 1981 and 1982.

Your proposal is being placed on the Committee's agenda and it will receive serious consideration at a forthcoming meeting. It is not unusual that stamps suggested for a specific year will be considered for programs the Committee is developing for later years. Because we have many thousands of active proposals on hand, we are unable to advise proponents of stamp subjects about changes in their status. We depend upon the persons and the organizations who propose new issues to inquire periodically about them. Please address written inquiries to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, in care of the Stamps Division, U. S. Postal Service, Washington, D. C. 20260. If you wish to telephone us instead, you may direct such calls to Jack Williams, Dickey Rustin, Fran Feldman or Ann Mills, all at (202) 245-4951.

Our stamp and postal stationery program can be no better than the suggestions we receive for new issues. Please accept our thanks for sharing your idea with us.

Sincerely,

Jack Williams
Coordinator, Citizens'
Stamp Advisory Committee

NOTE:



LETTER SENT TO NUMEROUS SEA TURTLE RESEARCHERS AND CONSERVATIONIST IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THE ISSUANCE OF STAMPS FEATURING SEA TURTLES. AS THE RESULT, STAMPS WERE ISSUED BY PAKISTAN, PAPUA NUGINI, MAURITANE, PITCAIRN, FILIPINES, TOKELAU, AND PROBABLY ALSO COSTA RICA.

University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O.Box 1346 • Coconut Island • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
Cable Address: UNIHAW

1980

Dear

One of the small conservation projects that we have undertaken here in the United States involves a letter writing campaign aimed at persuading our postal service to issue commemorative stamps displaying sea turtles. A copy of the original proposal, as well as a few representative letters of endorsement, have been attached to illustrate how we have thus far proceeded in this matter.

The portrayal of sea turtles on postage stamps provides an excellent means for creating public awareness of the need for both conservation and research. As you are probably aware, the subject material used on postage stamps usually relates to aspects of national heritage. Sea turtles would therefore be well suited as a stamp topic in the case of your own country. I do not know what procedures are followed by your postal service in adopting subject material, but I would like to suggest that you make the appropriate inquiries and give serious consideration to submitting a proposal for sea turtles. Postage stamps constitute important sources of revenue for most countries due to international sales to collectors. Government authorities are consequently continually searching for new and exciting topics. The suggestion of a sea turtle issue could very well be readily received and placed into action.

Sea turtles have already appeared on stamps issued by a number of countries. I have enclosed copies of several of these stamps for reference purposes. If you decide to pursue this matter further, as I hope you will, please do not hesitate to contact me if you think I can somehow be of assistance.

Best regards and Aloha,

George H. Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist

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enclosures



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O.Box 1346 • Coconut Island • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
Cable Address: UNIHAW

July 15, 1980

Mr. Edward Mallek
Member
Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
4999 Kahala Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

Dear Mr. Mallek:

My good friend and colleague, Dr. Leighton Taylor of the Waikiki Aquarium, has told me of your interest in the proposal to issue commemorative stamps displaying sea turtles. As a researcher and conservationist of sea turtles, I have been a strong supporter of this timely idea. Over the past few months, enthusiastic letters of endorsement have been sent to the Postmaster General by numerous individuals and organizations throughout the United States. For your background information, I have made copies of some of the more interesting and informative letters that have come to my attention. I am hopeful that you will have the opportunity to read through this enclosed material before the proposal comes before your committee for appraisal. It is my understanding that the next meeting of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee will take place during early August, and that the sea turtle proposal will very likely be considered at that time. Based on a letter from the Postal Service dated 27 May 1980 (copy attached), Dr. Taylor and I were under the impression that the proposal was on the agenda for discussion at the June meeting.

In addition to constituting a part of the wildlife heritage of the coastal continental United States, sea turtles have historically been an integral part of Hawaiian and other native cultures in the Pacific region. This has encompassed such important and varied aspects as food sources, religion, art, folklore, medicine and the fashioning of useful implements such as fishhooks from the shell of the hawksbill turtle.

The current national and international interest in sea turtles makes it desirable for such a commemorative stamp topic, if approved, to be issued at the earliest possible time. I realize, however, that there are numerous constraints involved in the production and issuance of commemorative stamps.

If you have any additional questions concerning the merits of this stamp proposal, I would be most happy to talk to you by telephone (247-6631 or 395-6409) or meet with you in person at your convenience. I would also appreciate any advice that

Mr. Edward Mallek, Member
Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee

July 15, 1980
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you can give me on how to further enhance the possibilities of the proposal being adopted. Would it be appropriate and worthwhile for me to send similar dossiers of endorsement letters to other members of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee?

Thank you for your assistance and interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

GEORGE H. BALAZS
Assistant Marine Biologist

GHB:ec

Enclosures



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O.Box 1346 • Coconut Island • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
Cable Address: UNIHAW

August 25, 1980

Mrs. Mary Ann Owens
Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
P. O. Box 1164
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11202

Dear Mrs. Owens:

Mr. Edward Mallek, my fellow resident here in Hawaii, has told me of your interest in the sea turtle stamp proposal and requested that I provide you with background information. As a researcher and conservationist of our marine environment, I have been a strong supporter of this proposal, originally set forth by Dr. Archie Carr of the University of Florida, which requests the issuance of a set of four commemorative stamps displaying sea turtles. In addition to constituting a part of the wildlife heritage of the coastal continental United States and Caribbean region, sea turtles have historically been an integral part of Hawaiian and other native cultures here in the Pacific. This has encompassed such important and varied aspects as food sources, religion, art, folklore, medicine and the fashioning of useful implements such as fishhooks from the hawksbill turtle. The current national and international interest in sea turtles makes it desirable for such a stamp topic, if approved, to be issued at the earliest possible time. I realize, however, that there are numerous constraints involved in the production and issuance of commemorative stamps.

Over the past several months, enthusiastic letters of endorsement for the sea turtle proposal have been sent to the Postmaster General by numerous individuals and organizations throughout the United States. I have enclosed copies of some of the more interesting and informative letters that have come to my attention. In addition, I am sending an article on sea turtles authored by Dr. Carr which originally appeared in Audubon Magazine. I am hopeful that you will have the opportunity to read through this material before the proposal comes before your committee for final appraisal. It is my understanding that the next meeting of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee will take place during October, and that the sea turtle proposal will be considered at that time.

Mrs. Mary Ann Owens
August 25, 1980
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Thank you for your assistance and interest in this matter. Please feel free to contact me for any additional information which may be required.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist

GHB:md

Enclosures



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O.Box 1346 • Coconut Island • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
Cable Address: UNIHAW

May 20, 1981

Dear

As you will undoubtedly recall, last year you wrote a letter to the U.S. Postmaster General expressing support for the issuance of commemorative stamps portraying four species of sea turtles. I am pleased to report that your correspondence proved to be a valuable contribution to a file of over 200 letters endorsing this wildlife conservation theme.

I am writing to you at this time to let you know that the sea turtle proposal is still very much alive for use in a future stamp issue. I have been informed that each year the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (appointed by the Postmaster General) receives several thousand suggestions for stamp themes. Obviously the vast majority of these topics have to be rejected and discarded due to the very limited number of commemorative stamps actually issued each year. The fact that the sea turtle proposal has been retained for further serious consideration is therefore a most encouraging sign. During the coming months I will continue to make periodic contact with the Stamps Division of the U. S. Postal Service, as well as one of the members of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee that lives here in Hawaii. The Committee meets once every two months, and further action on the proposal is certainly possible in the near future. If and when a firm date is established for issuing the stamps, I will write to you again providing all of the details.

Thank you again for helping to support this worthy stamp proposal.

Sincerely,



George H. Balazs

GHB:md



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Duval Building
9450 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

May 16, 1980

F/SER64;CAO

TO: F - Terry L. Leitzell
FROM: F/SER - William H. Stevenson
SUBJECT: Commemorative Sea Turtle Stamps

Attached is a letter for your signature to William Bolger, Postmaster General, endorsing requests (attached) by Russell Train and Archie Carr to issue commemorative sea turtle stamps and offering NMFS technical assistance in making the stamps accurate in their depiction of sea turtles.

To support our public information efforts to protect and conserve sea turtles, I request you sign the letter or ask F/MM to redraft it for joint signature with Lynn Greenwalt, Director of Fish and Wildlife Service, or Mr. Frank if you believe this approach more appropriate or effective.

I will make regional personnel available for technical assistance as required.

Attachment





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Washington, DC 20235

F/SER64:CA0

Mr. William Bolger
Postmaster General
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Mr. Bolger:

Recently I became aware of requests by Russell Train, World Wildlife Fund, and Archie Carr, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (ICUN), to you regarding commemorative stamps on marine turtles. The species of turtles proposed were the green, loggerhead, hawksbill and Kemp's (Atlantic) ridley.

I would like to strongly endorse the requests and offer the assistance of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) by providing fisheries biologists knowledgeable about sea turtles that might facilitate accurate depiction of the species.

We are very much interested in the proposed idea because of the joint responsibility NMFS shares with the Fish and Wildlife Service to protect and conserve sea turtles under the Endangered Species Act. Part of our conservation efforts are devoted to informing the public about the status of sea turtles because we believe public awareness of the need to protect sea turtles will promote conservation.

The issuance of commemorative stamps featuring endangered and threatened sea turtles will be an extremely valuable tool in promoting conservation through public awareness.

Please contact me if we can provide any assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Terry L. Leitzell
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries





University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O.Box 1346 • Coconut Island • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
Cable Address: UNIHAW

Dear

As you will read in the attached correspondence, a proposal has recently been submitted to the US Postmaster General for the issuance of a block of four commemorative stamps displaying sea turtles. I am convinced that this is an extremely worthwhile endeavor with potential for stimulating further conservation and research of sea turtles, both here in the United States and in the numerous foreign countries that receive U. S. mail.

The chances of this stamp proposal being approved can be strengthened considerably if individuals and organizations express their strong support through letters written to the Postmaster General. I am therefore asking if you will take the time from your busy schedule to write such a letter of endorsement. Your letter should be addressed to:

Mr. William Bolger
Postmaster General
Washington, D. C. 20260

In order to take full advantage of the publicity and momentum generated by the recent Washington sea turtle conference, I hope you will be able to send off your words of support at the earliest possible date. Also, I would greatly appreciate receiving a blind carbon copy of your letter so that some assessment can be made of the magnitude of our campaign.

Thank you in advance for your valuable assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

GEORGE H. BALAZS
Assistant Marine Biologist
and Deputy Chairman
IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Group

GHB:ec



ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR,
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUN 3 1980

Mr. William Bolger
Postmaster General
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Mr. Bolger:

I am in hearty agreement with the proposal to show endangered sea turtles on a block of four commemorative postage stamps.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is vitally concerned with the preservation and protection of these turtles, and has a strong program to aid their survival.

A major task of our law enforcement section is halting the importation of products made from skins, feathers, and hides of endangered species, including sea turtles. Public awareness of this problem, as offered through your stamps on domestic and foreign mailings, could help to ease this problem.

I know the value of your stamp messages. The Wildlife Conservation Postage Stamp Series, initiated in 1956 by a Fish and Wildlife Service employee, has helped tremendously in maintaining interest in our natural resources.

Because the marine turtles need help, and because the Postal Services are in position to offer such help, I urge you to endorse this proposal. They will certainly make an interesting and beautiful block of stamps.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lynn A. Greenwalt

Director

cc: George H. Balazs
Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa