

SARAH FISHMAN

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We arrived at the Kona airport at around 1:00 pm. Mrs Fast, George, the guy responsible for the trip, his son Christian, Barry, who works at the National Marine Fishery Service and I waited for a half hour until the Hawaii Preparatory Academy people came to pick us up. David Gulko and Heidi arrived first. I don't know how Heidi got involved with this, but she's really nice. I'd say she's 21 or so. Another car came soon, and we left for the camp. We had to go to Hilo to get a part for the car, and then we were off.

The campsite is down a skinny rocky road that turns off the highway. There are big locked gates so people can only get in if they have a key. The camp is beautiful! There's a sort of cleared area (except for the palm trees with coconuts that can fall and kill you) where everyone put their tent. The beach is right there, a black sand rocky beach. We had to walk along a path to get to where the turtles are caught. There's a little stream that runs along the beach; it's a stream because there is an island that makes that way. The mouth of the stream opens up to the ocean, making a small bay. The net is put at the middle of this small bay. The big bay is all black and long. The lava that makes up this place is beautiful. You can see how it flowed and how it cooled. You know how lava looks when it's flowing; the very top cools so it doesn't move, but underneath, the lava breaks under and keeps moving. Then that cools and stays and so on. It looks like it should still be moving.

Teams are set up to keep 2½ hour watches on the nets. I was

supposed to be on the second shift, but I'm going to go snorkling instead. This snorkling expedition is at night! I'm a little scared to go, because vision is so tunneled with only flashlight light to steer by. But it should be interesting. The nets were set up at 6:30 pm, and the first team was watching. I was back in the camp wandering around meeting the kids when someone said there was a turtle in the net. Already? wow. I grabbed my flashlight and headed down to the little bay. Five people or so swam out to the net. In Five minutes they came back with something in the innertube with a bottom on it. The turtle inside was huge, or at least I thought so. George said it was only medium-sized. Oh well, what do I know? This creature was beautiful, healthy and strong. Even out of the water it only took a breath every five minutes or so. Hearing a turtle breath is creepy. If I were asleep some night and I heard something breath like that creature did I'd be scared out of my mind. He hisses when he breaths and that sounds like he's getting strangled. Every once in awhile he gets a gasping hissing breath.

The snorkling at night was seriously interesting. The water was very brackish. I couldn't see a thing. Mrs. Fast and I held on to the innertube, waiting for someone to see a turtle. That night George caught two turtles, which is unbelievable since I could barely see my hand in front of my face. All together six turtles were caught that night

The next morning after breakfast we went to take the data on the turtle that we needed before the day got too hot. Their shells, head, and tails were measured. We pumped their stomachs to see what they had eaten the night before, we drew their blood

and tried but failed to get fecal matter. Letting the turtles go was fun. We put them in the innertube and swam them out beyond the point.. It was fun to see them swim away. You knew they never wanted to see us again.

After the turtles were done, Mrs. Fast and I went on an exploration of the place. We walked from the little island to a beach on the point. we rested there for a while, soaking up the rays. We walked down the whole length of the point to the end of the little bay. As we were walking we saw two or three turtles stick their heads out of the water. When we got back to the beach we decided to go snorkling to try to catch some of those turtles, but we didn't see any. The water was freezing where we went snorkling. One of the very nice things about this place is that the ocean water is barely salty. The salt sinks down because it's denser, and the surface is almost totally salt free. So as we were getting out of the water we got all the salt washed off. While we were snorkling I could see where the salt water and the fresh water mixed. It was like a gas floating in the water, making everything look wavy. At first I thought my eyes were going weird on me, but Mrs. Fast said she saw it too.

We went back to camp and had lunch. I found out I had the second shift from 8:30 to 11:00 to watch the nets. I hung around for awhile and talked to Mrs. Fast in the tent. Heidi came in to say "hi" and we all talked for two hours about what we thought of E.S.P. and our perceptions of it. We talked about how untouchable and weird people are.

8:30 came along, so Mrs. Fast and I headed out to the beach for my shift. The two other kids, Barry, another adult Kimberly,

Mrs. Fast, and I played Scrabble while we waited. We caught one turtle on our shift and George, who had gone snorkling caught another one. The nets were taken down that night. Seven turtles were caught. The next morning we took the data on those turtles, let them go, and got all the tents down and the campsite ready to go. We left around 1:00 pm.

These three days will always stick out in my mind. Everything that happened was so beautiful and fun and interesting. I consider myself very, extremely lucky to have been able to do this.

