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June 9, 1989

To : Paul Kawamoto
From : Bill Puleloa
Subject : Synopsis of Turtle Nesting Activities at Kawaaloo Bay, Molokai
Summer of 1988, June 15th to September 30th

Kawaaloo Bay (aka Ranch Moomomi) is a crescent shape bay with a white sand beach located on the north shore of Molokai. It is approximately 3/4 mile long with the widest portion of the beach being about 100-150 yards from the water's edge to the vegetation line. Accessibility is granted at the discretion of the landowner Molokai Ranch, Ltd. This area being relatively remote, no water nor electricity is available and except for occasional fishermen is seldom visited by the general public. Furthermore, being on the north side of the island, the prevailing trades and marginal waters help restrict traffic to a minimum.

Our first report of turtles coming ashore last summer came on July 5th. Investigation revealed no actual diggings in the sand but merely that the animal had crawled ashore and then returned to the sea. This incident occurred at the western part of the bay.

Approximately three weeks later on two consecutive nights (July 30th & Aug. 1st), two or more turtles crawled ashore and dug a total of 7 separate "pits" toward the eastern portion of the bay. 5 of these pits were dug during the first visit on the 30th and the second two on the following night.

On August 14th, 2 weeks later, one set of tracks indicated another single turtle crawled ashore to deposit her eggs. She dug a total of 5 pits very high up in the pohuehue (beach morning glory) all of which were very close to each other and approximately in the middle portion of the bay. From this incident came one verified successful hatching as juvenile sea green turtles were actually observed emerging from one of the pits on October 8th approximately two months later.

On August 30th, another single set of tracks was seen indicating another single turtle coming ashore. This female turtle dug a total of 2 pits again approximately in the middle portion of the bay. Subsequently, this nesting also proved successful as many juvenile turtle tracks were observed radiating out from one of the pits two months later on Oct. 24th.

No other subsequent observations of nesting activities were recorded and our monitoring was officially terminated on September 30th.

In sum, during the summer of 1988, six separate incidents of turtles coming ashore ostensibly for nesting purposes were recorded at Kawaaloo Bay, Molokai. Because no tagging of turtles was conducted it is not known if these incidents involved six separate individuals because it is possible some of them may have crawled out more than once. A total of 14 pits were excavated with a minimum of two successful hatchings confirmed from these incidents, and that one hatching at least involved the species Chelonia mydas.

cc: Ed Misaki
NIBs
George Balazs ✓