




1,000th Sea Turtle Released

September 22, 2017

NOAA Fisheries and the Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute work together to recover and protect sea turtles.



On September 22, NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center released the 1,000th sea turtle rescued and rehabilitated in the Hawaiian Islands. For more than thirty years, NOAA Fisheries' stranding program in Hawaii has been responding to dead or injured sea turtles. This program has collected important information about population threats and impacts while treating injured sea turtles to help support recovery efforts. This particular rehabilitation case marked the milestone 1,000th sea turtle and also highlights our partnership with the [Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute](#) .

NOAA works closely with the Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute and other partners to respond to injured or dead turtles on Maui. In the future, our collective vision is that the Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute will host a sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation center to treat threatened and endangered Hawaiian sea turtles.

This 1,000th rehabilitated adult male green sea turtle was stranded on a beach on Maui with injuries resulting from fishing line entanglement. The Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute rescued the turtle and then it was transported to the NOAA Inouye Regional Center in Honolulu. A team of NOAA veterinarians and researchers examined the turtle and deemed it necessary to amputate its damaged front flipper. Then, they returned the turtle to Maui for release into the wild. Unfortunately, fishing gear related injuries and deaths are increasing in Hawai'i.



NOAA Fisheries team and partners from the Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute carefully transfer "Turtle 1,000" prior to release on Maui (Photo: NOAA Fisheries/Irene Kelly).

NOAA Fisheries reminds everyone that sea turtles are protected under State and Federal laws. Life-threatening interactions include nearshore hook-and-line fisheries and boat strikes. Human disturbance can also cause stress to foraging or basking turtles.

How can you help? There are three primary ways to support continued conservation of Hawaiian sea turtles:

1. Respect sea turtles by viewing them from a distance of 10 feet (3 meters) on land and in the water.
2. Boaters, please post a watch to look for turtles or other protected species to avoid collisions. Drive boats slowly over shallow reef habitats and especially near harbors. Fishermen, [It's OK to Help!](#)
3. Fishing line and trailing gear is the greatest known cause of injury and death to sea turtles. Don't leave your gear unattended. And if you accidentally catch a turtle—and it's safe for both you and the turtle—help to prevent deadly entanglement by following these steps:
 - REEL-IN the turtle,
 - HOLD TURTLE by its shell or flippers,
 - CUT LINE as close to the hook as possible, and
 - RELEASE with NO LINE ATTACHED.

NOAA Pacific Islands Region has a new statewide hotline to report sightings or emergencies for sea turtles, monk seals, dolphins, and whales: 888-256-9840 and (for non-emergencies) email: RespectWildlife@noaa.gov.

The group of researchers and biologists from NOAA Fisheries and the Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute work together to recover and protect sea turtles (Photo: NOAA Fisheries/Irene Kelly).

Last updated by [Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center](#) on March 13, 2019