



Advertiser Photo by David Yamada

turtle's the issue

Rep. Howard Oda watches solemnly as a baby sea turtle is shown to a House committee. The turtle was one of two taken to the hearing Monday in connection with a protection bill.

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11 turtles to get ride out to sea

Eleven green sea turtles will be passengers aboard the Coast Guard cutter But-tonwood when it leaves Sand Island Monday morning.

The turtles, all wearing tags, will be taken to an area off Lehua Island just north of Nihoa. There, they will be released.

"We are hoping they won't be caught by fishermen and that they will breed," said Charles DeLuca, curator of the University of Hawaii's Waikiki Aquarium.

THE TURTLES to be released have been housed at the Aquarium, where they were being used for a study of turtles serum by investigators at the University's department of microbiology.

After the study was finished, the turtle population at the Aquarium needed to be thinned out. Some of the smaller turtles were released off Waikiki.

This still left the problem of the larger turtles, some of which weigh as much as 400 pounds.

THE PLAN TO release the turtles at sea was devised by Eugene Kridler, administrator of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Area, and Michio Takata, director of the State Division of Fish and Game.

The Coast Guard agreed to furnish transportation for the turtles.

"We want to release the turtles in an area that is fairly inaccessible to fishermen," Takata said. "We want to watch for these turtles, and see if they will breed and join in the migration of the other green sea turtles from their nesting grounds to their feeding grounds."

"When the Aquarium indicated it had some surplus turtles, we thought it would be a good time to see how