

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

Published by Gannett Pacific Corporation

JOHN A. SCOTT Publisher and Chief Executive

CHINN HO Chairman

ALEXANDER S. ATHERTON President

A. A. SMYSER Editor

HOBERT DUNCAN Executive Editor

Published at 605 Kapiolani Boulevard / Honolulu, Hawaii. 96813

A-20

Friday, May 31, 1974

Endangered Turtles

It's a pleasure to note one victory in the efforts, often frustrating, to save animals whose survival is endangered.

This is the adoption by the State Board of Land and Natural Resources of regulations to protect sea turtles, seen sometimes but not as often as formerly, in Hawaiian waters. The turtle population has declined drastically because of the demand for turtle meat in restaurants, for turtle shells in curio shops.

The new regulations should be of particular gratification to George H. Balazs, of the University of Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, who sounded the alarm and led the campaign to protect the turtles.

Under the regulations, adopted after a year of public hearings and discussions, the taking of leatherbacks, hawksbill and green sea turtles is prohibited, with certain exceptions.

Actually, the green turtle is the only one of consequence in the Hawaiian Islands; it's officially listed as depleted although its numbers have declined so much that many scientists think it should be listed as an endangered species.

Two bills affecting turtles failed to make it through the last session of the Legislature. One would have imposed a moratorium on taking turtles and the other would have released up to \$35,000 for research and management studies.

While conservationists may regret failure of the bills to pass, the new regulations should help give turtles a chance to replenish their numbers.