

TASS helps with sealife research

Community projects abound in the Air Force. There is one Hawaiian community, however, that the pilots of the 22nd TASS at Wheeler AFB have given their special attention.

For the past two years the pilots and other TASS personnel have been aiding various government agencies concerned with the research of Hawaiian sea life. While flying routine missions around the islands, the pilots report their sea life sightings to MSGt. Harry V. Edwards, the squadron coordinator, who turns the reports over to the George Balazs of the University of Hawaii, Marine Biology Division and Dr. Ed Shallenberger of Sea Life Park.

Mr. Balazs, Hawaii's noted authority on seaturtles, recently gave enthusiastic praise to the pilot's efforts. "I was amazed at the pilot's concern for the protection of all forms of sea life. Their sightings are invaluable to my research project, intended to aid the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources in making decisions on locations of turtle

sanctuaries. And hopefully this research will reveal the need for wildlife management of possible endangered species. Turtle's don't have many friends." Mr. Balazs' research is funded by the State Marine Affairs Coordinator and the National Sea Grant Program.

Dr. Shallenberger, Hawaii's leading authority on whales, uses the pilot's input as a basis for a Humpback Whale population survey; a project funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The end product of his research may result in a sanctuary for the affable Humpbacks in Hawaiian waters. "Indications are the Humpback population has dwindled to 5 per cent of what it originally was; therefore, it is an endangered species," said Dr. Shallenberger. "If a sanctuary is located in Hawaii, 22nd TASS pilots will have played a part in its installation."

"The best thing about these projects," adds Edwards, "is that you can see positive results of your efforts if you're ecology oriented. And it doesn't cost the Air Force anything."



George Balazs, University of Hawaii, Capt. Richard Burdette and MSGt. Harry Edwards discuss the aid given by pilots of the 22nd TASS to sealife research programs. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Capt. Frank Jiron)

15th Air Base Wing/OI
Hickam AFB, HI 96853

THE HAWAIIAN FALCON

Volume 22
Number 32
Aug. 18, 1978