

# Maui News

Maui's Newspaper Since 1900

SATURDAY

50 CENTS

August 25, 2001



ARCHIE KALEPA photo

A large tiger shark, estimated at more than 20 feet long, was feeding on a dead sea turtle about a half-mile off Kahana in West Maui Thursday morning. While state conservation officers and Maui lifeguards warned people in the water of the feeding shark, no beaches were closed as the shark focused on

what it does best: cleaning up a large carcass in the ocean. Tiger sharks regularly include turtles in their diets although they are known to eat virtually anything, from slow-swimming puffer fish to other sharks to garbage. They also are suspects in most of the recent attacks on humans in Hawaii waters.

## Large tiger shark



# spotted feeding off West Maui

By LILA FUJIMOTO  
Staff Writer

KAHANA — Oceangoers were reminded to be aware of their surroundings after a large tiger shark was seen feeding on a dead sea turtle Thursday off Kahana.

"This is the biggest shark I ever saw, and I've seen a lot of sharks," said Maui County lifeguard Capt. Archie Kalepa, who used a personal watercraft to get within about a foot of the creature.

"I would say it was 22 feet long. Guaranteed."

Kalepa and state Department of Land and Natural Resources officers responded to the area after a tour sailboat from the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort reported seeing the shark Thursday morning.

When he arrived, Kalepa said the shark was about 400 yards offshore and munching on the remains of the turtle as the carcass drifted toward the shore. But the turtle, followed by the shark, then started drifting out to sea until they were about a half-mile offshore, Kalepa said.

DLNR officers decided the beach didn't need to be closed, but they and lifeguards warned swimmers and kayakers within a two-mile radius of the shark's location.

Kalepa, who oversees county beach lifeguard operations in West Maui, said about one shark sighting a week has been reported in the Lahaina area dur-



ing the summer breeding season. Most of the sightings have been of smaller sharks, some close to shore, Kalepa said.

"This past month, we've had reports every day at Launiupoko," he said.

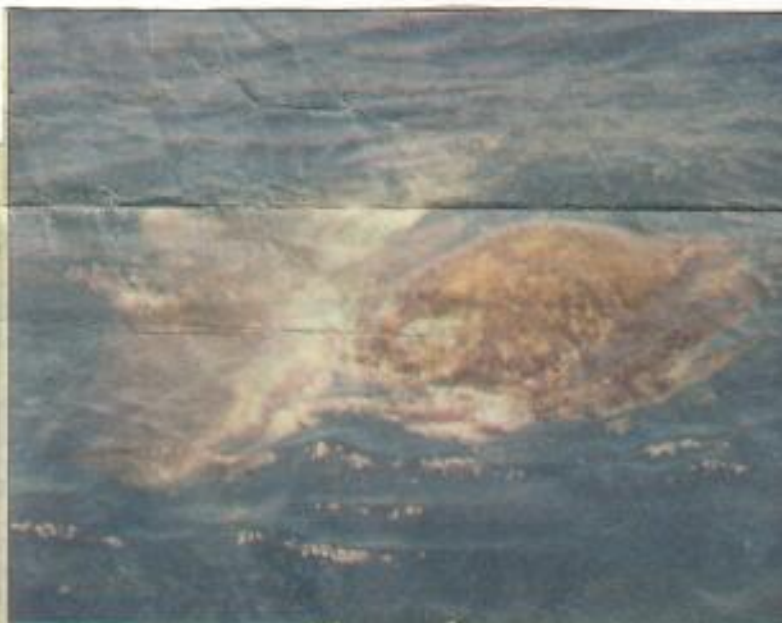
The sharks seen at Launiupoko are probably black tip or gray reef sharks," said Russell Sparks, education specialist for the aquatic resources division of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources.

"These are small reef sharks that probably pose little or no risk to people," Sparks said.

While two shark attacks were reported off Maui waters last year, the only two incidents reported this year were at beaches off Oahu, Sparks said.

On March 23, a shark bit the left hand of a bodyboarder off Sandy Beach. On April 11, a surfer at Ewa Beach reported being cut on his left hand, possibly by a shark.

Sparks said it wasn't surprising that the tiger shark was seen off Kahana because of the presence of the turtle car-



cass attracting the shark to the area.

A year and a half ago, large tiger sharks were drawn to the ocean between Molokini and Kahoolawe to feed on a large dead whale, Sparks said.

"That's kind of their role," he said. "If there's a dead carcass of anything, there's probably tiger sharks that are drawn in."

To reduce the risk of a shark attack, oceangoers should stay away from dead animals in the water and avoid swimming near people who are fishing or spearfishing, Sparks said.

"People shouldn't be terrified of the water, but should be aware," he said. "If there's a dead carcass or dead fish that might draw a shark, maybe you shouldn't go."

Other safety tips include staying out of the water at dawn, dusk and night when some sharks move close to shore to feed, and avoiding murky waters, harbor entrances and areas near stream mouths, channels or steep drop-offs.

Experts also recommend that people who have open wounds or are bleeding stay out of the water because sharks can

detect blood in very small concentrations.

People should also avoid wearing high-contrast clothing or shiny jewelry and refrain from excessive splashing that attracts sharks. Erratic activity, fish or turtles may be a clue to the presence of a shark.

If a shark is sighted, it's recommended that swimmers leave the water quickly and calmly and avoid provoking or harassing a shark.

When he approached the shark in murky water off Kahana on Thursday, Kalepa said the shark was circling the carcass of the turtle, which had none of its flippers.

"He wasn't afraid of anything," Kalepa said.

Sparks credited lifeguards and DLNR officers for keeping an eye on the shark's activities Thursday and keeping people out of danger.

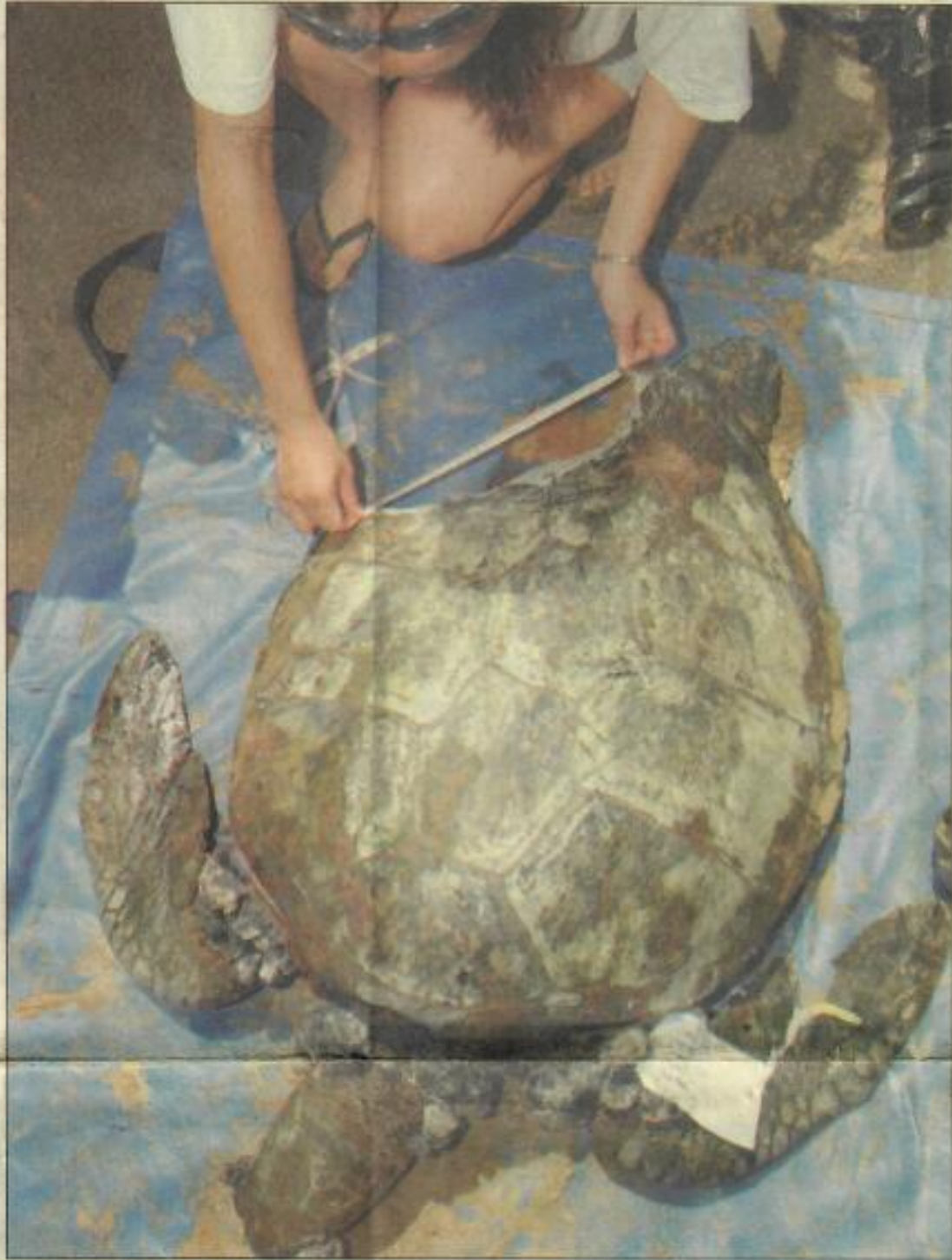
"The county lifeguards really do above and beyond a lot of times in being out there, monitoring the situation and helping keep people aware," said.



# The Maui News

Maui's Newspaper Since 1900 10-2-2003

## Shark takes a bite out of green sea turtle





**Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary** Hawaiian cultural educator Joylynn Oliveira measured the 13 ½-inch-wide shark bite that was torn from the shell of a green sea turtle on Wednesday off Kihei's Kalama Park. Oliveira made the measurements outside the sanctuary's Kihei office while the dead turtle was being prepared to be wrapped in plastic and placed in a freezer.

The Maui News  
MATTHEW THAYER  
photos

## Turtle dies from injuries off Kihei

By **MATTHEW THAYER**

Staff Writer

**KIHEI** — A grievously injured green sea turtle struggled to shore at Kihei's Kalama Park on Wednesday morning with a 13 ½-inch-wide, half moon-shaped chunk ripped from its shell, apparently by a tiger shark.

The turtle was reported to the South Maui Sea Turtle Stranding Network office around 10 a.m. But the animal, which is an endangered species, died from its wounds before help could arrive, said Joylynn Oliveira, a cultural educator with the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctu-

ary.

About 40 people had gathered around the dying turtle and some took the death hard, she said.

"I think the people were kind of stunned," Oliveira said. "It was a real emotional time for the majority of the viewers since they saw it pass away in front of them. To see what a shark can do, it was really frightening for them."

Oliveira said that although turtles are a favorite prey of sharks, she has not seen many injured as severely as the one on Wednesday.

**See TURTLE** on the next page



# Opinion

## Shark sighting had no business on front page

This letter is in response to The Maui News' stupidity in the Aug. 25 issue. Great care needs to be taken in how you report shark sightings. Glorification of an animal doing what it has been doing for millions of years does not warrant a massive front-page article.

A majority of Maui's economy relies on tourism. The Maui News successfully terrorized the tourist masses with that obscene article.

I say this because I have been directly affected. I work in the aquatic tourist industry and have been forced to deal with the aftermath of destruction you have

created. I have suffered personal economic loss as a result of this article.

I will agree this is newsworthy, but was this sighting more important than Firestone's settlement? More amazingly, was it bigger news than your small Page 3 article "Grand jury indicts two high-ranking HPD officers"? I think not.

Is The Maui News interested in creating a false reputation that Maui has waters infested by extremely large, man-eating sharks? Does Maui want to have the same reputation and press coverage that Florida has been receiving?

Maybe The Maui News should try to redeem itself with an article or, better yet, a series of articles on how important sharks are to the world and Maui. Help expand the horizons of the reader and educate, don't traumatize them.

Steve Andrews  
Lahaina

**SATURDAY**

August 25, 2001



**TODAY'S FORECAST FOR THE CENTRAL VALLEY**

Mostly sunny with mauka showers. Complete report on A2.



## Football preview

Returning players  
key for Lunas

On Page

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ARCHIE KALEP

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