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Territory Hopes to Expand Marine Turtle Population

Marine turtles, though not one of the most popular edible sea animals in the Islands, are a valuable and puzzling element of Territorial fauna.

The turtle supply is not , but the potentiality is , according to Vernon E. Brock director of the Fish and Game Division.

Paul L. Breese director of the Honolulu Zoo recommends an investigation of this marine reptile through banding.

But the slow moving sea animal thwarted previous attempts of Mr. Brock to trace its growth.

He made two trips to the Leeward Islands between Midway and Niihau where the turtles breed and from where they migrate to these Islands.

He said on his second trip in 1951, he found one of the animals he had banded in 1951 only 20 feet from the spot where he originally had found it.

Information is needed on these turtles so that they might be protected and perpetuated.

With perpetuation at their breeding places it is believed turtle populations might be expanded to accommodate a small fishery here.

WILLIAM F. QUINN
Governor

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VERNON E. BROCK, Director

HONOLULU 14, HAWAII
October 29, 1957.

Mr. Tom Harrisson,
Curator and Government Ethnologist,
Sarawak Museum,
Sarawak, Borneo.

Dear Mr. Harrisson,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your reprints concerning turtle banding.

In 1950 I tagged some 30 or 40 turtles in the leeward chain of the Hawaiian group, that is between French Frigate and Pearl and Hermes Reef. In 1951 I visited the same area and caught a number of the turtles which I have marked the previous year sunning themselves on the beach in practically the same locations where they had been taken for banding. There has not been any recovery of these marked turtles since; but as the leeward island area is a lonely isolated region with a few visitors, this is not surprising. As far as I know there is no turtle nesting in the main island of the Hawaiian group; yet; we do have a turtle fishery which is not of any great volume and which does not show any evidence of operating on a declining population of turtle. The supposition is that the leeward islands constitute the nesting area but this has not yet been proved.

Your data indicating that these animals nest only every other year is certainly interesting and is worth in light of our situation.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) VERNON E. BROCK, Director
Division of Fish and Game.

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