



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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Cable Address: UNIHAW

October 25, 1976

LTC W. L. Spicuzza  
Commanding Officer  
Enewetak, Marshall Islands 96737

Dear Colonel Spicuzza:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify and confirm the salient points discussed during our meeting of October 12th relating to the sea turtles of Enewetak Atoll.

With respect to gaining insight on the status and survival outlook of the world's sea turtle populations, the most authoritative source available is a policy statement of "Principles and Recommendations" issued in April, 1975 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This document, which also establishes guidelines for the rational utilization of turtles, was formulated at the request of IUCN by an international team of professional sea turtle biologists. Although these "Principles and Recommendations" do not have the force of law, such policy statements issued by the highly respected IUCN frequently form the basis for regulations and legislation. A copy of these "Principles and Regulations" is now on file in your office. The section most relevant to the Enewetak situation appears in item number six and reads:

"As regards primary exploitation (meat, hides, eggs), where it can be demonstrated that local turtle populations can tolerate exploitation, and the desire or necessity is present, this should be done by peoples traditionally dependent on them, with methods ensuring minimal waste for local consumption."

It is my opinion that this guideline is entirely reasonable, proper, and above all, necessary for the conditions soon to exist at Enewetak. The Enewetak natives are the people that have been traditionally dependent on the Atoll's sea turtles, therefore the resource should be reserved

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for their sole use. This use should, of course, be at a level that will ensure the turtles' continued perpetuation for the benefit of future generations. In this respect, one of the objectives that I hope to eventually accomplish in my research at Enewetak is to determine what level of exploitation will be suitable. However, as we discussed, the more immediate problem is the forthcoming influx of large numbers of military and civilian personnel for clean-up activities. It is my recommendation that before this project starts, a ban should be placed on the taking of all sea turtles by people who are not natives of Enewetak. I urge you to concur with this recommendation and implement the proper measures at the earliest possible time.

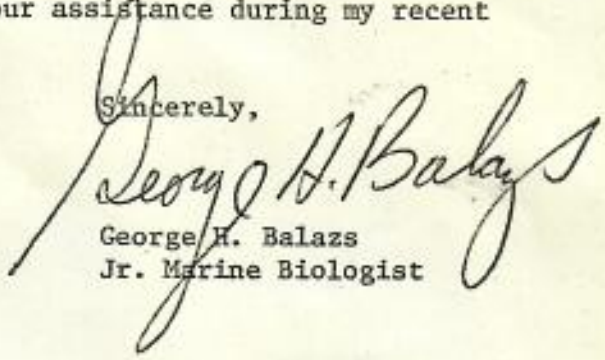
During our discussions I also focused attention on the fact that the hawksbill turtle occurs at Enewetak, and that this species receives full protection in the Trust Territory (as well as other areas under U. S. jurisdiction) under provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-205; 87 Stat. 884). Additionally, the Code of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Supplement 1, Volume 1) lists a number of restrictions which control the taking of green turtles (the second species of sea turtle found at Enewetak). It should be pointed out, however, that the Code was designed principally for Micronesians in order to aid in the perpetuation of their own native resources. At this time in history, it is an unusual event to interject a comparatively large number of non-natives into a small Trust Territory atoll, such as will soon take place at Enewetak. The limited protection afforded to green turtles by the Code cannot be expected to be adequate under such atypical conditions. Without the additional protection I have recommended, it is very likely that the tenure of the clean-up personnel will bring about a significant degradation to Enewetak's sea turtles. This will be a direct loss to both the diet and life style of the Enewetak natives. To a lesser extent, it will also be a loss to the scientific community as potential exists for gaining unique information on sea turtles in the Enewetak Atoll environment.

Since returning to Honolulu I have had the opportunity to review the recommendations for an overall conservation policy at Enewetak which were communicated by Dr. Smith to Mr. William Stanley (ERDA) on May 14, 1976. Although my principal area of expertise and concern is sea turtles, many of the points I have made apply equally to other fauna and flora at Enewetak. I therefore fully endorse Dr. Smith's recommendations. At the same time, I would also like to see protective mechanisms developed to safeguard the nesting seabirds from disturbance during their critical incubation and hatching periods.

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I want to thank you once again for your assistance during my recent research visit to Enewetak.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George H. Balazs". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

George H. Balazs  
Jr. Marine Biologist

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cc: S. V. Smith  
Director, MPML

Enc: publication "Green Turtle Migrations in the Hawaiian Archipelago"