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MARINE ZOOLOGY

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Dr. George Balacz
Hawaiian Institute of Marine Biology
Coconut Island, Kaneohe
Oahu, Hawaii.

Dear George:

When I was in Hawaii a couple of weeks ago I mentioned that Charley Veron had told me about a huge turtle nesting he had observed on the Barrier reef. I saw him later and asked him for details and this is what he told me.

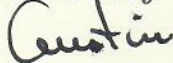
He says that about a year before he had seen turtles breeding on Raine Island so in Early December 1975 he was up by Murray Island going south and they decided to put in at Raine to see what was to be seen. Apparently Raine is due south of Murray island about 100 miles and even with the tip of the Cape of York. It is a phosphate Island of about 40 acres on the outer barrier.

When they got there the place was covered with breeding turtles. They were all breeding, covering each other, digging up each others eggs and he says the smell was terrible. They apparently were greens and Veron says that they actually counted 13,000 but estimated that there must have been 20,000 in the vicinity. They were kept busy turning over turtles that had become stranded. Looked like a tank battle had taken place there.

I'm not sure if any pictures were taken but I think he said that Bustard was there but I may be wrong on that.

Thought you would be interested. I was. Turtles were my first love back when I was a teenager. Somehow I got a long way from them but I've always enjoyed knowing and reading about them.

Sincerely



Austin E. Lamberts