

FRI AUG 22 1980 AD F

Turtle steak unavailable despite radio commercial



Scoops Kreger
ms.fixit

DEAR MS. FIXIT: A Kailua restaurant regularly advertises turtle steaks in commercials on Radio KGU. I thought that as of September 1979 it became illegal to kill sea turtles or to import turtle products because of their endangered status.

Is this restaurant breaking the law by continuing to import turtle meat, or are the steaks they offer part of a shipment brought to Hawaii before the import prohibition went into effect? If the meat has indeed, been in the restaurant's freezer for so long, can it still be sold under Hawaii's health laws?

A — A local official of the U.S. Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service provided the following information:

After sea turtles were officially declared threatened or endangered species and killing them and importing any turtle parts or products prohibited, a Grand Cayman Island turtle farm obtained an injunction against the import prohibition.

Imports of meat from farm-raised turtles continued. Then the farm lost its case in court. When imports finally became unlawful in May, some restaurants had some turtle meat in stock.

The restaurant in question was among them. A spokesman for the owner said, "We had just imported a huge supply." The restaurant

reportedly now has only about two pounds left and, for the past several months, has not served any steaks — only turtle soup, which has prolonged the supply. As the meat hasn't been on hand for as long as you assumed, it does not pose a health problem?

When the radio commercials touting "turtle steaks" were brought up, the spokesman said correcting the copy had been inadvertently overlooked but that matter would be tended to.

DEAR MS. FIXIT: The pebbly looking sidewalk along Royal Hawaiian Center has some steps that I feel are not too well defined. I only spotted them just before I fell there recently.

I think stripes should be painted on the steps which are the same color as the sidewalk. Or something else should be done to better define them because it is dark there. The street light does not give enough light.

A — In response to your complaint, two site inspections were made — one by an official of the center's development company and another by a city engineering division official.

Independently, both officials concluded that the area where the steps are located is "well lighted" and that the steps are clearly visible to pedestrians watching

where they are walking. One official noted that those not paying attention would also miss seeing stripes painted on the steps.

DEAR MS. FIXIT: Recently your column mentioned two male Mormon missionaries calling on homes in Ewa Beach. Well, my companion and I are those two. We usually are only persistent if invited back. Please tell the complainant we are sorry to have upset her and to let us know if she changes her mind. — ELDER JEFF LYONS.

A — Your address will be kept on file in case the complainant decides to invite you back now that she knows you are legitimate.

NOTES TO READERS:

- To "Suffering From Gritted Teeth" who had a complaint about a business phone installation: Please get in touch with Hawaiian Telephone's Al Rodrigues at 546-2027. He said that because of "possible" miscommunication, a partial refund may be involved.

- To the person who complained of school buses parked on residential property in Kaimuki: Official follow-up inspection showed the buses removed as ordered in a notice of violation.

Have a question or problem Ms. Fixit can handle for you? Call 525-8076 and leave a message or write her at P.O. Box 3110.

Conflict-of-use case: swimmers vs. fishermen



Scoops Kreger
ms. fixit

DEAR MS. FIXIT: I was at Diamond Head Beach several Sundays ago. A fisherman had his lines set out in the sandy-area waters where people go swimming. All afternoon he was chasing people out of "his" area. In a case like this, who has priority over the other? Does the fisherman have the right to chase people off the beach?

A — No, he doesn't, but, on the other hand, he has a right to have fishing lines in the water.

The ideal solution is for fishermen and swimmers to respect each other's rights, cooperate and exercise common sense in situations of this type — classic "conflict of use" cases.

If a fisherman arrives on the scene first and casts his lines, it would be foolhardy for later-arriving swimmers to swim amidst his hooks and lines and risk getting hurt if the fisherman refused to be cooperative. Yet, if the swimmers are in the water first, a later-arriving fisherman should not cast his lines amid the swimmers.

There are now no laws regarding who has priority in situations of this nature. But in these crowded times, as more and more cases of conflict of use arise (as with hikers and hunters for instance), it may become necessary to establish some official regulations.

DEAR MS. FIXIT: What can be done about the mopeds that fre-

quently use the bike path in the Pearl Harbor-Pearl City area? The mix of bikers and joggers is a bad enough problem at times, but mopeds make the path even more hazardous. Aren't they unlawful on bike paths? — **BIKER AND JOGGER.**

A — Mopeds are prohibited on bike paths. Police suggestion is, if possible, to get to a phone and call the Pearl City Station when moped violations are spotted. Also, as an aid to enforcement, let the station know at what times the violations are most common.

DEAR MS. FIXIT: For the past couple of weeks, there's been a couple living on a raft in Palolo Stream right behind Iolani School at the junction where the stream goes into Ala Wai Canal. For lack of bathroom facilities, I've seen surrounding areas being used for toilet purposes.

What can be done about this situation, which must be clearly illegal? If allowed to go unchecked, couldn't it eventually become another one of those controversial cases where squatter's rights are claimed?

A — Monday morning a police officer checked the area on foot — from one-quarter of a mile above the Date Street bridge to the junction where Palolo Stream meets the Ala Wai Canal. He found no evidence of a raft, raft material or anyone living in the area from a raft.

Later in the day, to serve as a

double check, a person from the boating division of the state Water Transportation Facilities Division walked the area starting at the Date Street bridge. The results were the same: negative.

If you or anyone else spots the "houseboat" raft again or can provide additional clues, phone 548-2515, the boating office, immediately and ask for Bill Locey.

CLARIFICATION: In a recently printed complaint the wrong year was given as the date when it finally became unlawful to import any turtle parts, even meat from farm-raised turtles. The date should have been the spring of 1979, not 1980.

This would mean that any turtle meat now being served, to be lawful, had to be imported early in 1979 and freezer-stored since then. The enforcement branch of the U.S. Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service points out that any turtle meat now offered by restaurants or for sale should be suspect of being freezer burned or from unlawfully killed turtles or unlawful imports. Phone 548-5602 to report suspect cases.

NOTE TO Jim Reynolds, who left a recorded message for me last week: Please phone me at 525-8033 during the day.

Have a question or problem Ms. Fixit can handle for you? Call 525-8078 and leave a message or write her at P.O. Box 3110, Honolulu 96802.

FORUM

the Readers' Page

Serving Turtles in Restaurants

In spite of existing federal and state laws, several restaurants located on Oahu and the Neighbor Islands continue to sell sea turtle steak and soup. These items do not always appear on the regular menu, but rather may be offered as the "special of the day," either verbally or with a clip-on card. There are really only three explanations that can account for the meat products being offered by these establishments. That is:

1—The meat was illegally imported into Hawaii directly from a foreign country after May 1979, or illegally transported to Hawaii from another state after September 1979, the dates when the shipment bans went into effect.

2—The meat was obtained from our Hawaiian sea turtles which were illegally killed.

3—The meat was brought to Ha-

wai prior to the shipment bans and therefore has been sitting in a freezer for a minimum of 12 months before being thawed and served.

None of these possibilities is palatable.

If turtle meat older than 12 months is indeed being served, certainly it would have degraded to the point of being unwholesome, and possibly even unhealthy.

If the restaurants in question are selling illegally imported meat, or are somehow involved in the killing of Hawaiian turtles, then wildlife officers need to vigorously pursue the offenders.

Regardless of which is the case, conservation ethics and good sense make it advisable for the public to avoid restaurants still selling turtles.

George H. Balazs

ILLEGAL TURTLE ON SALE HERE

In spite of existing federal and state laws, several restaurants located both on Oahu and the neighbor islands have continued to sell turtle steak and soup. These items do not always appear on the regular menu, but rather may be offered as the "special of the day," either verbally or with a clip-on card. There are really only three explanations that can account for the meat products being offered by these establishments.

That is:

- 1) The meat was illegally imported into Hawaii directly from a foreign country after May 1979, or illegally transported to Hawaii from another state after September 1979, the dates when the shipment bans went into effect;
- 2) The meat was obtained from our Hawaiian turtles which were illegally killed;
- 3) The meat was brought to Hawaii prior to the shipment bans, and therefore has been stored in a freezer for a minimum of 12 months before being thawed and served.



An adult olive ridley, ripe with eggs, being gutted at the factory in Oaxaca, Mexico (in September 1979). Much illegal meat comes from this source.

None of these possibilities are palatable. If turtle meat older than 12 months is indeed being served, certainly it would have degraded to the point of being unwholesome, and possibly even unhealthy. If the restaurants in question are selling illegally imported meat, or are somehow involved in the killing of Hawaiian turtles, then wildlife officers need to vigorously pursue the offenders. Regardless of which is the case, conservation ethics and good sense make it advisable for the public to avoid restaurants still serving turtle. Furthermore, when suspect restaurants are encountered, it would be worthwhile to notify the Enforcement Division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by telephoning 546-5602 or writing to P. O. Box 50223, Honolulu, HI 96850.

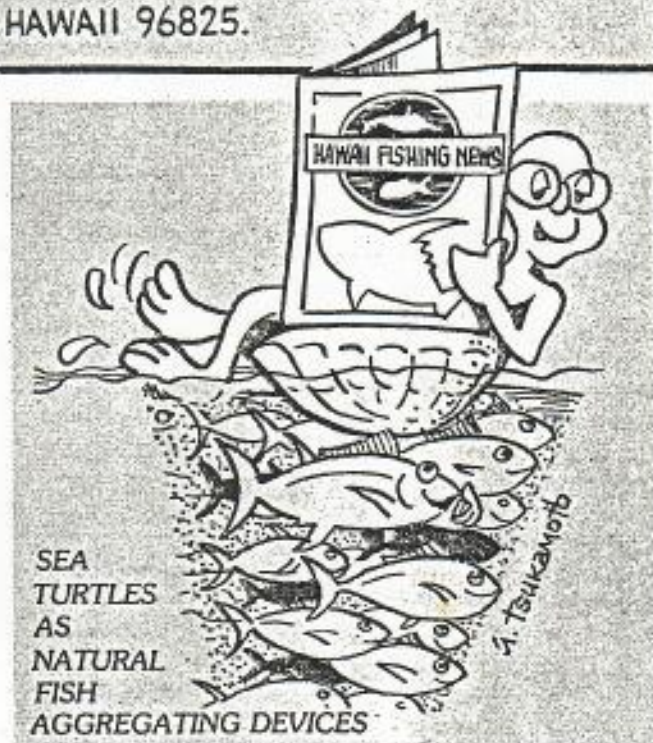
Recent investigations in Florida and Texas have resulted in federal indictments against six individuals and eight corporations for illegal activities involving 106,000 pounds of sea turtle meat. The indictments include conspiracy, transporting turtle meat with fraudulent documents, and importing in violation of the U.S. Endangered Species Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. In a separate case earlier this year, the crewman of a shrimp trawler that had intentionally killed a sea turtle was assessed a \$5,000 fine and one year's prison sentence, suspended for three years.

*George H. Balass
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O. Box 1346
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744*

HOLO HOLO STYLE

SHARE YOUR CATCH, SEND PHOTO + COPY TO HFN HOLOHOLO

P.O. BOX 25413 HONOLULU, HAWAII 96825.



SEA
TURTLES
AS
NATURAL
FISH
AGGREGATING DEVICES

The value of green sea turtles as ecological, educational and aesthetic components of our Hawaiian marine environment is well-known to many residents and tourists who have seen these great reptiles swimming in Island waters. These reasons alone seem sufficient to justify current protective laws aimed at preventing further population declines following many years of heavy and uncontrolled exploitation. However, an additional benefit of special interest to the fishing community has now come to light. The following short but true "fish story" was recently related to me by my colleague, John Naughton, of the National Marine Fisheries Service:

While trolling between Kauai and Niihau during calm weather, a turtle about two-feet long was seen floating at the surface with several seabirds circling overhead. A closer inspection revealed the presence of small fish aggregated under the turtle along with two mahimahi. As the boat passed by, the turtle quickly dove out of sight and both fish were hooked-up and landed. The total catch amounted to a respectable 40 lbs.

Maybe there is something to the Japanese "Urashima Taro" folk tale where the sea turtle becomes the fisherman's good friend!

George H. Balazs
Honolulu, HI



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O. Box 1346 • Coconut Island • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
Cable Address: UNIHAW
December 9, 1981

Mr. James Bartee
Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 50223
Honolulu, Hawaii 96850

and

Mr. Eugene Witham
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 3830
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

Gentlemen:

Under the "Restaurants in Review" section of the most recent issue of Aloha Magazine, the Peacock Restaurant at Kaanapali is reported to sell "boula boula" made with turtle meat. According to statements attributed to the manager, a large stock of turtle meat was obtained prior to the prohibition, and the restaurant still has enough to last "another year or so".

You will undoubtedly recall that similar cases involving other restaurants here in Hawaii were the focus of attention in August of 1980 (see attached articles). If the Peacock Restaurant is indeed selling turtle meat that was imported prior to the interstate shipment ban of September 1979, it would now be at least 26 months old. This would certainly seem to be a suspect situation, therefore I hope you will investigate it at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist

GHB:lb

HSB 3/30/89 A4

Turtles drowning in a sea of plastic

By Helen Alforn

Star-Bulletin

Sea turtle specialist George Balazs stroked a young turtle weighing only a few pounds — a size he says is rarely seen in the ocean.

This one was raised from a hatchling at Sea Life Park, where it lives happily and safely with family members.

Their relatives on the high seas aren't so lucky. They are in constant danger, threatened by predators and human garbage — nets, rope, pieces of plastic, glass bottles, strapping tape, wire, oil and much more.

Seven turtles have been found dead on Hawaii shores since 1984 when an international conference was held here to focus on debris problems, Balazs said.

"All seven were clogged with debris in their lower guts that was compacted in hard balls."

That may not seem like a high number, the National Marine Fisheries Service scientist said. "But we consider that the tip of the iceberg."

Studies done since 1985 by the National Wildlife Health Center show that 16 of Hawaii's 18 spe-

cies of seabirds feed on plastic debris, said Stewart Fefer, refuge manager of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

More than 90 percent of Laysan albatrosses sampled had plastic in their system, said the Honolulu migratory bird biologist.

Adult birds are able to throw up the material, but they feed their chicks until they can fly, and the chicks can't regurgitate, he said. "So they are more affected than adults. The growth rate of the chicks is reduced, and a fair amount of plastic may affect the chicks' survival."

At a news conference yesterday highlighting meetings here next week on marine debris, Balazs, Fefer and John Henderson of the Fisheries Service's Honolulu laboratory talked of the threats.

Henderson is involved with efforts to protect and increase endangered Hawaiian monk seals, among other animals suffering from floating trash.

Richard S. Shomura, former director of the laboratory and chairman of the Second International Conference on Marine Debris, said the first workshop in 1984 primarily involved biologists

and derelict nets entangling marine life.

But the problems have escalated tremendously, and many agencies are worried, he said. More than 200 marine, wildlife and social scientists, economists, lawyers, government and industry officials, and others will explore the issues Monday through Friday at the Ala Moana Hotel, Shomura said.

The public must be alerted to the problems because a new federal law slaps penalties up to \$50,000 on any watercraft dumping plastics in the ocean, said Coast Guard Capt. Gordon Piche. It will require self-policing through education, he said.

The dilemma is that most of the debris does not wash ashore but floats in the ocean where it snares and entangles marine life and is eaten by them, Balazs said.

Young sea turtles are particularly vulnerable because they live in areas where currents come together with natural food and floating objects, he said.

These turtles are seldom seen in the ocean until they are about 15 pounds because they live at or near the ocean surface, drifting



By Dean Sensui, Star-Bulletin

Scientist George Balazs holds a young sea turtle that's safe with its family at Sea Life Park from dangerous ocean debris.

and swimming, he said. Consequently, it's difficult to assess the impact, he said.

But the seven dead turtles found in Hawaii in recent years contained no seaweed or shore food — only plastic from the high seas, Balazs said.

"It's not just whether we care

about albatrosses and turtles, which we do, but the quality of the entire environment we're a part of," Fefer said.

"Some of these things could affect the food chain, of which we're at the top.

"The ultimate concern is for the survival of humans."



THE WAY WE LIVE

By Susan Manuel

6/20/89

HON STAR BULL

June: A celebration of life, color, aromas

TO a Midwesterner the idea of seasons in Hawaii can seem a kind of inside joke. The car air conditioner works like hippo breath, and the traffic's intolerable.

But summer's also when south-shore swimming becomes warm and undulating. The other evening, out on the swell under a vast sunset, a man pulled up, pushed back his swim goggles and asked if this was heaven. And he hadn't seen "Field of Dreams."

Mountain apples, guava and mangoes are ripening. Next will come the sweet smell of rotted road kill. Avocados cut off before their prime lie around like hard little wombs. The ginger's soon to perfume; Tantalus and the gardenias just gave out in a pungent puff of glory. Toads on the dark path splat against my knees.

It's mid-kau, the dry season, and time for explosions of royal poinciana, night-blooming cereus, purple williwili, tigers claw and shower trees.

In the month of Kaaona, Hawaiians prepared opelu nets for the kapu lifting in July, according to the "Calendar of Natural Events." When the ohia lehua grew nearer to the sea, the Hawaiians knew from the brushy red flower that aku fishing was hot. Now confined to the mountaintops, summer-peaking lehua blooms signal United and JAL.

Tuna and blue marlin have muscled here from Latin America and California to spawn. Food is scant, but the waters are love-inducing and predator-free, other than billfishers looking for photo ops. A good, innocent place for babies.

IN June, ruttid breadfruit globes told Hawaiians that a squid special was on in shallow waters. Orange hala balls beamed the news that urchins were fat with eggs and uhu plentiful and well-fed. Days of longer sunlight make everything grow more abundantly in the ocean, so surfers and divers see more green sea turtles feeding in fields of limu. But the big action this month is nearly 500 miles away at the French Frigate Shoals, where each night a half to three dozen pregnant turtles climb onto slips of beach to nest.

No one knows why they paddle all the way up there to mate and lay eggs. "The most practical answer is that they've always gone there," says George Balazs, turtle expert at the National Marine Fisheries Service. "There are what appear perfectly fine sand beaches in remote beaches much closer than where they go to nest. But the same pattern is repeated around the world."

"Maybe the answer lies in the very distant past. Maybe the answer lies in ocean currents. Up to adolescence, little turtles live on the high seas. Maybe current systems bring them back to lush shorelines of the main Hawaiian islands."

The turtles seen here now are between babies, or too young. Average mating age is 25; weight 175 pounds; length across the back nearly 3 feet.

BALAZS has been depressed about the turtles for several years now. Officially a threatened, not endangered, species, they're slowly increasing in numbers at the French Frigate Shoals.

But every year in the past decade more turtles stricken with massive tumors are being picked up around the main Hawaiian Islands. Florida is the only other place this is happening. Can tourism cause cancer?

Balazs brought in a Florida expert who believes a virus is at work. Last week's EPA list of polluted waters around Hawaii included several sites where sick turtles have been found. Balazs speculates a pollutant may be compromising turtle immune systems, allowing a virus to invade.

June also seduces subterranean termites to lights by the swarm-load, fantasizing their futures as kings and queens of vast colonies.

But domesticity strikes with a radical change in life style. The termites drop to the ground and throw their wings over their backs, fracturing them so they fall off. Earthbound, male following female, the couples search wood for a moist nail hole or a crack, trekking through the perilous terrain of killer buffos, geckos and ants. The pay off is progeny: each pair surviving to nest together — 5 percent of the swarm, says entomologist Julian Yates — produces up to 5 million colonists.

Then there are species like kolea (the golden plover) who just can't get a good meal summers in Hawaii, so when June comes they head for Alaska.

Susan Manuel's column on environmental issues runs Tuesdays in Today. Write her at P.O. Box 3080, Honolulu, Hawaii 96802.

Group fights to save turtle's life

□ The endangered animal's outlook is grim after it is hit with a spear gun

By Helen Altonn
Star-Bulletin

A young green sea turtle — an endangered species protected under state and federal laws — is fighting for its life with partial paralysis caused by a man-made puncture wound in its neck.

"The outlook is grim," said sea turtle specialist George Balazs, watching over the animal at the

National Marine Fisheries Service's Honolulu Laboratory.

The injured turtle is a juvenile, about 5 to 6 years old, he said. Its sex can't be determined until it's older.

Balazs is keeping the animal cool with wet towels in a cardboard box. It can raise its head and has some movement in its back flippers, but its front flippers are limp.

"Isn't that sad?" said Gene Witham, senior enforcement agent for the fisheries service in this area. "He should be out in the ocean."

The animal's rescuers at Sunset Beach also were concerned. Carole Beller and Richard Whyte were snorkeling at Kam-

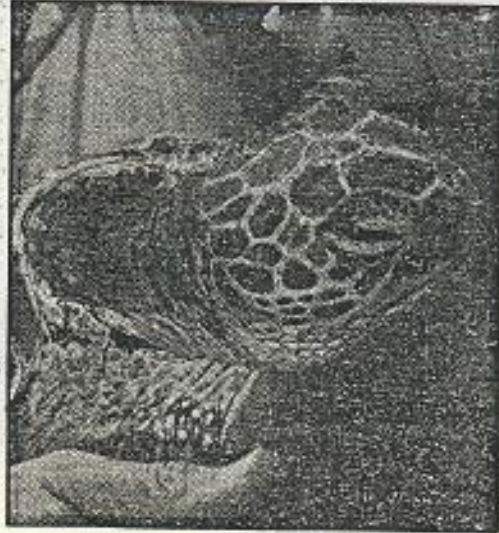
Numbers to call

Injured or dead sea turtles and actions harming or disturbing them should be reported. You can call:

- National Marine Fisheries Service Enforcement Office, 541-2727
- State Conservation and Resources Enforcement Office, 548-5918

mie's surfing break, across the channel from Sunset Beach, at about 4:45 p.m. Sunday when they

See TURTLE, Page A-8



This green sea turtle, called "Mr. T," by rescuers, has a man-made puncture wound in its neck.

By Terry Lusa, Star-Bulletin

JUNE 29, 1989

How to Save - Bulletin

TURTLE: Group fights to save injured animal

Continued from Page A-1.

saw the turtle. He was in a ravine in the reef, about 8 to 10 feet under water, Beller said.

Whyte dove down and brought the turtle to the surface. It wasn't breathing and wouldn't move his flippers, Beller said.

"We didn't know what to do, but finally he started breathing a little bit. We held him in the water and swam with him. Richard pumped his shell — giving him artificial respiration."

They decided he would die if they let him go, so they took him to the shore, she said.

"We started calling all the places we could think of to call, to put some effort into saving his life, although we were not convinced that was the best thing to do. We thought maybe letting him go back into the ocean and die a natural death was the best thing to do."

"But people started to come around, with the spirit of saving an endangered species," she said.

"It was a whole beach adventure from 5 to about 9 p.m. Everyone was concerned, I was amazed at all the people in the neighborhood, kids and adults, everybody got into (trying to save) this little guy."

"We don't even care for each other like all of us care for this turtle. It was the cutest little thing."



By Terry Luke, Star-Bulletin

National fisheries experts George Balazs, left, and Gene Witham say the injured green sea turtle can raise its head and has some movement in its back flippers, but its front flippers are limp.

They named the animal, who is about 17 inches long, Mr. T and built a little pool for him at the edge of the ocean, she said. "He was in water up to his nose. . . . He started breathing better, so we thought there was a lot of hope."

But while cleaning him off, they noticed he had been punctured, Beller said. They had seen some young people spearfishing in the area earlier, she said.

A state conservation officer picked up the turtle at about 9 p.m. Sunday and took him to Sea Life Park, which alerted Balazs yesterday morning.

Witham also had been notified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was checking into a possible violation of the federal endangered species act.

Ronald Kama, Oahu branch chief of the state Conservation and Resources Enforcement Division, said his staff also will pursue any violations of the state law. But, he added, "Trying to find who injured a turtle is like finding a needle in a haystack."

Barry Choy, who assists Balazs with the turtle program, said he thought the puncture hole — about the size of an ice pick — was

caused by a hinge gun, a spear with a very small diameter.

The hole is very deep, apparently severing some nerves so the turtle could not move its front flippers, Balazs said. "The first thing any turtle does is flip its front flippers, even when it is weak."

Green sea turtles are on the endangered species list to help the populations build up because they are in danger of extinction, Witham and Balazs emphasized.

"This kind of action certainly sets that back," Witham said.

Molesting, harming or disturbing the turtles in any way is against federal and state law. That includes grabbing turtles and riding them to the surface — a popular sport, Witham said.

Criminal penalties include a fine of up to \$25,000 and one year in jail. Civil penalties are up to \$10,000 and six months in jail.

With 70,000 scuba-diving tourists estimated in Hawaii annually, Balazs and Witham are concerned about increased stress to the animals.

They ask that people avoid areas in which they see turtles:

Some dive-charter skippers are encouraging use of turtles for "show and tell," Witham said. "They are subject to arrest, and if we can prove it, they will be arrested."

He said the fisheries service is getting increasing reports of injured or dead turtles, probably because of three factors — more awareness that they are threatened animals, more turtles because they are protected and more poaching.

Witham said he has about five to six turtle cases a year.

Why save turtles?

"Why save endangered species?" Credible responses are routinely given to this question, but often the answers may not seem relevant to what's happening here and now. The recent rash of stinging attacks by jellyfish swarming off our prime tourist spot of Waikiki offers a common-sense, practical example of why we should save endangered species.

Sea turtles love to eat jellyfish whenever they are around. Turtles gulp them down with delight, apparently immune to the sting of this dining treat. There are no direct means for humans to control the jellyfish problem, except to keep beachgoers out of the water.

But a natural, and environmentally sound, solution does exist: Save our sea turtles by working to promote their protection and proliferation to levels of true ecological abundance. More turtles means fewer jellyfish drifting close to popular swimming places.

Tourists are thrilled to see the frolicking turtles and, like the rest of us, wince from the jellyfish. A practical and economically valuable reason indeed to save an endangered species!

GEORGE H. BALAZS

A debatable swap

Why destroy Hawaii's rain forest to air-condition Waikiki?

WILL KYSELKA

The Honolulu Advertiser Thursday, April 26, 1980 A17

Letters

A-8 □ Saturday, August 24, 1991

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

Marine life can't observe pollution warning signs

Once again raw sewage is mistakenly pumped into Hawaii's coastal seas. And again, beaches are shut down and warning signs posted telling people to stay out of the contaminated water. That's fine. But what about the fish, sea turtles, and other marine life exposed to this pollution? How do they stay out of the water?

George Balazs

Sewage treatment, more

City has failed

City Public Works Director Sam Callejo said he doesn't envision taking disciplinary action against the employees who caused a million gallons of sewage to be pumped into the Windward sea, fouling Kailua and Lanikai beaches on Admission Day (8/16). "They should have known better," Callejo said, "but it's one of those things that happen, unfortunately."

It was not. It was negligence that threatened Windward health, damaged priceless water quality, and destroyed confidence in the city's ability to safely perform its most fundamental task.

It makes you think again of all the other discharges caused by heavy rains, aging equipment or simply maintenance work. It makes you think of how unconscionably long the city has been laboring to bring forth a new Kailua plant which will upgrade treatment not at all. It makes you recall how 1,500 Kailua citizens had to pack a federal Environmental Protection Agency hearing before the city would even agree to meet its barest sewage treatment responsibilities. It makes you see a pattern.

Oahu has always been spoiled by the ease with which the ocean carries away our offal. The kind of wastewater treatment routinely practiced in many other states — you can safely swim in the water returned to Oregon's Willam-

ette River by cities such as Eugene and Salem — has always been regarded as needlessly costly here.

But is it? The immense damage done by sewage to Kaneohe Bay has shown that the Windward coast, the most spectacular waterscape in the islands, is also one of the most delicate. Windward waters don't need a forgiving man like Mr. Callejo in charge of their protection. They need an obsessive, anal-retentive, perfectionist engineer who will make damn clear just what it takes to get fired up at the Kailua Sewage Treatment Plant.

Since the city is incapable of providing such a leader, is it not time for Windward citizens to form a regional wastewater authority, take over the plans and plant, and do this basic job with the care we know it deserves? We could hardly do worse.

KENNETH C. MOORE
Kailua

■ ■ ■

Once again raw sewage is mistakenly pumped into Hawaii's coastal seas. And again beaches are shut and warning signs posted telling people to stay out of the contaminated water. That's fine. But what about the fish, sea turtles and other marine life exposed to this pollution? How do they stay out of the water?

GEORGE BALAZS

Letters

The Honolulu Advertiser Monday, September 9, 1991 A9

Expand Waikiki sanctuary

All of the inshore waters and coral reefs along world-famous Waikiki Beach ought to be declared a marine life sanctuary. The ocean resources of this vital area to tourism should be protected for everyone's viewing enjoyment, just like at Hanauma Bay.

Currently only a small segment of the waters off Waikiki have sanctuary designation. The recreational, educational, and economic benefits associated with accessible marine life sanctuaries, such as Hanauma Bay, are well known.

Spear-guns, gillnets and barbed fishing hooks are simply inconsistent with the modern-day uses of Waikiki's inshore waters. Waikiki is clearly an

area where an underwater sanctuary will do some good, and where the fish and other marine life are in need of additional protection. City, State and private planners working to improve Waikiki should embrace such a worthwhile proposal.

GEORGE H. BALAZS

Letters

The Honolulu Advertiser Tuesday, September 10, 1991 A15

Make Waikiki like Hanauma

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Spear guns, gillnets and barbed fishing hooks are inconsistent with the modern-day uses of Waikiki's inshore waters. Waikiki is where an underwater sanctuary will do some good, and where the fish and other marine life are in need of additional protection. City, state and private planners working to improve Waikiki should embrace this worthwhile proposal.

GEORGE H. BALAZS



Letters

Sept. 8, 1991 p. 6

Not disciplinary

Please allow me to quell speculation as to my temporary leave of absence. I had arranged with the Department of Health several months ago for a leave of absence to be the Chief Medical Officer of the Johnston Atoll Dispensary. I asked for the leave to supplement my income. There has been no disciplinary action within the DOH. I am certainly planning on returning to Hilo, my home, after my ninth-month contract on Johnston Atoll. I am grateful for all the community support and would like to assure my fellow citizens here that I and the Department of Health will continue to do what is right.

Sam Ruben, M.D.
District Health Officer

Editor's note: Dr. Ruben's point is well taken. But it remains inexplicable that the Department of Health chose to let a trained physician leave without staffing another physician to continue to deal with the health problems diagnosed by Ruben and physicians in private practice. Our editorial point (Aug. 29) was not so much on Ruben's departure as on the department's seemingly uncaring attitude toward the apparent health hazards affecting some Puna residents.

Hawksbill turtles

Biologists and their volunteer helpers at Hawaii Volcanoes

National Park deserve to be congratulated for their outstanding work to protect the critically endangered Hawksbill turtle that nests along the Puna and Ka'u coastline.

Hawksbills, known to the Hawaiians as Honu'ea, lay their eggs here at several remote sand beaches during the summer months. Unfortunately, not all of these sites are inside the boundary of the national park where they are easier to protect and manage. One site, in particular, located close to where a rocket launcher facility has been proposed, really ought to be formally designated as a sea turtle nesting sanctuary or wildlife refuge.

Park biologists should be given as much help and support as possible by the community to accomplish their conservation goals for the Hawksbill turtle.

George Balazs
Honolulu

Rights threatened

Geothermal development threatens the rainforest, the island way of life, the very breathing of the people. And beyond that, it threatens constitutional rights. Re-located persons can get compensation payments only if they agree never to protest in any manner against geothermal procedures.

I am in a cabin surrounded by

greenery and bird songs. Why would anyone want to replace these with sulfur fumes and dangerous ventings and restrictions on free speech?

Mary H. Jackson
Kurtistown

Letter policy

The Tribune-Herald welcomes and encourages letters from readers. Selection of letters for publication will not be made on the basis of whether they agree or disagree with the stated editorial stand of the Tribune-Herald.

Each letter must focus on a single subject of public interest; meet standards of reasonable taste; be no more than 300 words in length; and be signed with the writer's legal name, with a return address and a phone number at which the writer can be reached during normal working hours.

All letters are subject to editing for proper grammar and length.

New letter writers are especially welcome. Publication of letters from any one writer will be limited to two a month.

Preference will be given to short, double- or triple-spaced typewritten letters. At times, only excerpts of a letter may be published.

All letters should be sent to:
Letters to the Editor
Hawaii Tribune-Herald
P.O. 767
Hilo, HI 96721

Credibility, balance needed

Maui News writer Laurel Murphy's zeal to promote a New Age agenda is getting in the way of good reporting. Several weeks ago she gave a full-page promotion of Kirlian photography of "auras" to assess the health and diagnose nutritional deficiencies. But the gimmickry doesn't photograph the mythical aura, and it is worthless for medical and nutritional diagnoses. The \$160 charge for the services (and still more for supplements and herbs?) is wasted.

Her article on Elaine Willis (Jan. 22) has several egregious errors of fact and some silly advice. For example, contrary to Murphy's claim, Irwin Stone had nothing to do with the discovery of vitamin C. "Dr." Stone holds an honorary degree in chiropractic and a "Ph.D." from Donsbach University, a notorious diploma mill. This school's founder is a convicted quack whose hospital of horrors in Mexico was recently exposed on Inside Edition. Encyclopedias and basic texts, surely available to Maui News writers, have information on the discovery of vitamin C.

Also, the advice to drink eight glasses of pure water a day is ridiculous. One's daily water requirement depends on activity level, climate, fluid intake from other sources, and many other factors. No hard rule can apply. However, a reasonable rule of thumb is to drink enough to keep your urine dilute, that is, very light yellow.

Instead of blindly parroting the fringe, Murphy should consult skeptical experts to give her stories some balance and credibility.

Kurt Butler
Haiku

Turtle diners were lucky

A mere slap-on-the-wrist compared to what Mother Nature could have imposed as punishment. That's how one might view the two-day jail sentence recently handed down in Wailuku District Court to four homeless men caught cooking a sea turtle.

The pitiful turtle they were foolish enough to cut up and eat was riddled with disease. Ulcerated tumors protruded from its eyes, neck and shoulders. In addition, photos taken at the time indicate the animal was severely emaciated. This condition in sea turtles is often accompanied by infections of internal parasites, along with potentially nasty microorganisms.

No sick animal taken from the wild should ever be eaten. This applies to ones freshly killed, as well as those already dead for an unknown time, as the men in this case claimed in court. Furthermore, the health of a wild animal can't always be accurately judged by just looking at it. The possibility of severe illness from eating diseased wildlife is simply not worth the risk, even if the law isn't broken.

Just a few months ago a man was sentenced in federal court to a month in prison for intentionally killing a large turtle on the Big Island. Turtles were abusively overexploited in Hawaii for decades prior to becoming fully protected in the late 1970s. The average turtle takes about 25 years to become sexually mature. At certain locations in

The Maui News policy on letters

The Maui News welcomes and encourages letters to the editor. The letters should be brief and to the point and on subjects of general interest. Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number where the writer can be reached during working hours for verification. The writer's name and community will be published.

Letters should be limited to 250 words or less with shorter letters being given priority. Letters of any length are subject to editing. Typed letters are preferred but others will be accepted if they are legible.

Letters may be mailed to The Maui News, 100 Mahalani St., Wailuku 96793; or may be faxed to 242-9087.

Hawaii there are now some encouraging signs of population recovery. Most everyone would like to see this trend continue to ensure the long-term survival of these magnificent creatures. Turtles contribute to the overall diversity and enrichment of the Hawaiian marine environment. Also, like humpback whales, they are fun to watch.

George H. Balazs
Honolulu

Welfare system doesn't work

I am writing in regards to the welfare division of the Department of Human Services. I am very disappointed as for their policies on their budgets set for low incomes here in Hawaii. How ignorant can a government be in deciding Hawaii's income qualifications for our residents here?

I am 28 years old, and am pregnant with my first child, and this is the first and only time in my life that I or my fiance, who is 27, have ever asked for any type of help from our state.

All these years we've worked and paid our taxes, knowing that some of our hard-earned money in the past 14 years has gone to the IRS and state welfare offices of Hawaii to pay for other people. There are people who misuse the system and live off the welfare most of their adult lives.

I have worked since I was 14 years old, full-time after school, and during these years this is the first time I have been unable to work. Because of being diabetic it made my pregnancy harder for me, so I had to be pulled off of work earlier from being a waitress.

So who are they to turn us away?

We were turned away because we make too much money. Is \$950 per month too much money to take home for a young couple with an expected baby? Our rent is \$750 with utilities and the other \$200 we have to stretch for gas from Kihei to Kahului to work, food, phone and other needs. Sorry, but \$200 doesn't stretch for all that. The welfare office goes by your gross income, not your net. Unless you're grossing \$800 or less, you won't qualify. Well, we didn't qualify. We make too much money.