

May 10, 1983
Hilo, Hawaii
Verbatim from tape recording
of public meeting

TOM NAHIWA

I'm Tom Nahiwa. I was born and raised in Waimea. My young life was spent down by Kawaihae-Puako area. My dad was a fisherman. He and I dived together all the time. There was always an abundance of turtles, something the family would always enjoy eating. As I grew up, I always loved to dive and fish. I used to watch the turtles year after year, early in the morning, crack of dawn, when they used to make their routes inshore in the inlets, and I used to know how to set my nets to get them. So there was always many and lots of turtles. When I would dive, after I grew up and moved to Hilo, I would dive the Puna coastline, there was always turtles. We take, actually, what we need, because we know there's always turtles and can go back and harvest again if we needed any. But my family, my children, they were raised, and they know how good and ono turtle is. The turtle is plentiful. When they passed the law as far as regulating the catching of turtles, I was wondering why. It kind of make you lose faith- have no confidence in government administering the regulations governing the catching of these things. And I don't see why. I think sometimes possibly maybe they pass laws without facts. They don't understand. Just like they say, fish is wiped out. You know, you go by the moon calendar, the phase. Today you go you see menpachi in every rock. Tomorrow, when you dive, you can hardly see any menpachi. What happens? It's a change of moon phase. The same like uhu and other fish, on certain days you go it's plentiful. Like going for turtles, especially in our Puna coastline. There's lots of them. So I do hope they do allow us in our lifetime, at least, to bring back the enjoyment of having turtle on our table again. At least the children can enjoy it. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

Comment made during discussion period-

Just again, the government, it makes me wonder. The subject here is green turtles, but then our government again, you see I've hunted since I was a young boy. The government slaughters all the sheep. Gee, that's terrible, because you guys do that. I don't care about the little bird. They have a lot of islands they can go to. Slaughter everything, that's a shame. Look at our goats. I used to see 100's of goats. When we want barbecuegoats when we're fishing, always had food there. What happened when they go through the national park, they slaughter almost everything, shameful. Bad sense. And a lot of people are in need of food. I understand this turtle situation population. Sure, we had more catching of these green turtles and things like that. But when it's taken for food. We had cases in the past where people used to take pot shots at them. Don't understand all of this.