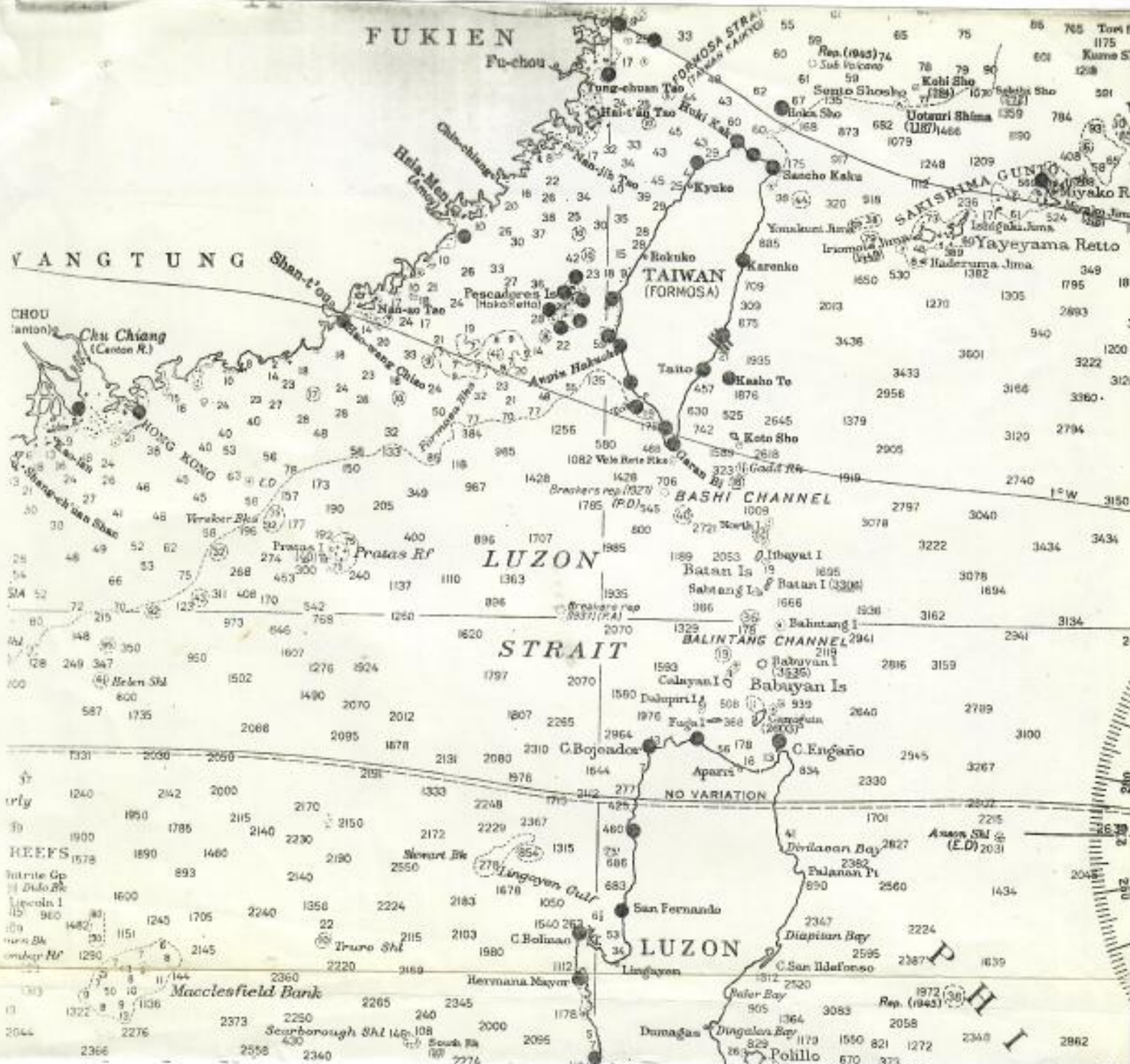


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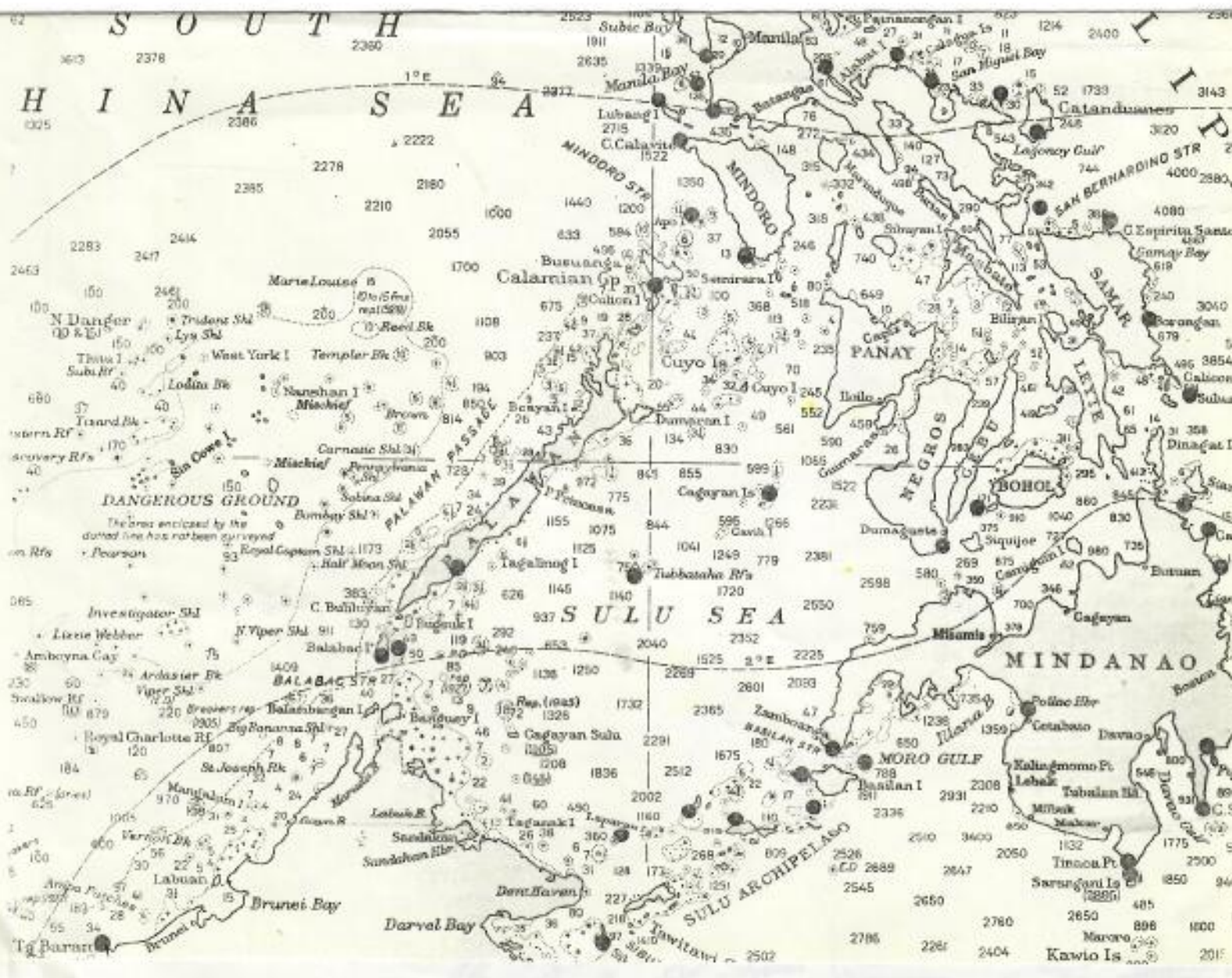
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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Fisheries Center  
Honolulu Laboratory  
P. O. Box 3830  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

July 22, 1985

F/SWC2:GHB

Ms. Teresa L. Herring  
Mr. Mike Gawel  
P. O. Box 9  
Kolonias, Pohnpei 96941

Dear Teresa and Mike,

Many thanks for your letter of June 25, 1985, which I just recently received here in Honolulu. I was pleased to learn that a tagging team made it out to Oroluk. I look forward to hearing the results, and receiving copies of all tagging data. Please write to me with this information as soon as your people get back to Kolonia.

I never heard from you again after you wrote to me asking if or how to proceed in obtaining U.S. federal permits to tag sea turtles. I wrote back saying that, as a threatened species listed under the Endangered Species Act, green turtles could be tagged as an extension of research conducted by our Laboratory. This point was confirmed for me by Eugene Nitta of the Protected Species Branch of the NMFS Western Pacific Program Office. Did you receive my letter dealing with this subject? Later I heard that you had proceeded to apply for a permit. What was the outcome of your application? I need to be fully informed of <sup>your</sup> status with respect to any federal or local government permits.

We would be delighted to also supply turtle tags to the Pohnpei Marine Resources Department, in view of their interest and inquiry. Again, if the tagging is conducted under our Laboratory's supervision, and involves green turtles, there should be no need for a federal permit.

It is encouraging to learn of the increasing interest in sea turtles in your region of the Pacific.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs  
Zoologist

cc: Balazs  
HL



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Fisheries Center  
Honolulu Laboratory  
P. O. Box 3830  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

October 31, 1985

F/SWC2:GHB

Ms. Teresa L. Herring  
Peace Corps Volunteer  
P. O. Box 9  
Kolonias, Pohnpei 96941  
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Teresa,

Mike Gawel hand-delivered your letter and a copy of your report covering the Oroluk Atoll turtle tagging assessment. This is indeed a valuable piece of data. It was surprising to learn that only four green turtles nested during 5 weeks of monitoring, and no hawksbills at all. Mike tells me that Oroluk has been commonly viewed by the people of Pohnpei as their most abundant nesting site for sea turtles. Clearly more tagging work is needed at this location in the 1986 season. In addition, it would be worthwhile to make the results of your work known to others so that an awareness will exist of the status of this rookery.

I agree that a short video tape on turtle tagging techniques would be very helpful for you and your fellow workers. I hope to have one put together in the near future.

Again, thank you for your excellent report. Please continue to count on my assistance in whatever way that is necessary. Since the tags you used have our Hawaii address, I will, of course, contact you immediately if any recoveries are reported.

Sincerely,

  
George A. Balazs  
Zoologist

cc: Mike Gawel



# POHNPEI STATE GOVERNMENT

STATE OF POHNPEI  
EASTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS  
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA 96941

Office of the Director  
of Conservation  
&  
Resource Surveillance

Marine Resources Div.  
P.O. Box B  
Kolonia, Pohnpei  
FSM 96941  
May 7, 1987

Dr. George Balazs  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
2570 Dole St.  
Honolulu, HI 96822-2396

Dear Dr. Balazs:

Attached is a copy of the report written by Clay Edson concerning our Oroluk Turtle Project, which has been tagging turtles under your permit. I would like to have Clay "clean up" the report slightly and submit it to Marine Turtle Newsletter, but this will have to wait until later this year when he returns home from University of South Pacific. This project was funded by a donation by Ms. Donna Matson of Los Angeles, following a visit to Micronesia in 1985.

The project seems to have proceeded well, thanks to a good crew and preparation and training by Peace Corps volunteer Teresa Herring. I hope the data I am forwarding to you is useful for your work. Any suggestions for subsequent work would be greatly appreciated.

As always, Micronesian interest for turtles is high, especially from a culinary point of view. The need for conservation of these animals is important if future generations are to "taste" (even visually) this animal. If you know of materials suitable for schools or appropriate television programs which could be aired, please contact me. We might be able raise some funds for some public education.

Thank-you very much for your help with this project. I hope that this and future projects here in Pohnpei will contribute to scientific knowledge and public awareness of the vulnerability of the turtle populations.

Sincerely yours,

*Flinn Curren*

Flinn Curren

cc: Kikuo Apis, Director C&RS  
Mike Gawel, FSM Chief of Marine Resources  
Donna Matson, President Western Instructional Television  
Teresa Herring  
Clay Edson

attachments

sent in 1985

FHTD AUG 17 1993

4301-4350 (50)

GREEN TURTLE TAGGING AND OBSERVATION - 1986

Oroluk, Atoll, Pohnpei State  
Federated States of Micronesia

AS OF THIS  
DATA SHEET, USED  
4301-4338

Turtle #	Tag #	Date	Time	Carapace Length(CM)	Activity	# Eggs
#01	✓ 4313/4314	04/30/86	0601 a.m.	132.5	False Crawl	
#02	✓ "	05/04/86	0227 a.m.	132.5	False Crawl	
#03	✓ 4315/4316	05/16/86	0646 a.m.	140.5	False Crawl	
#04	✓ 4317/4318	05/21/86	0130 a.m.	100	False Crawl	
#05	✓ 4319/4320	05/22/86	0630 a.m.	110	False Crawl	
#06	✓ 4321/4323	05/22/86	0655 a.m.	100	Nest	92
#07	✓ 4324/4325	05/27/86	0616 a.m.	97.5	Nest	77
#08	✓ 4326/4327	06/02/86	0530 a.m.	99	Nest	72
#09	✓ 4329/4331	06/03/86	1211 a.m.	110	Nest	127
#10	✓ 4321/4323	06/05/86	0220 a.m.	100	Nest	60
#11	✓ 4324/4325	06/08/86	0200 a.m.	97.5	Nest	103
#12	✓ 4315/4316	06/10/86	0210 a.m.	140.5	Nest	116
#13	✓ 4321/4323	06/20/86	0345 a.m.	100	Nest	86
#14	✓ 4324/4325	06/21/86	1232 a.m.	97.5	Nest	82
#15	✓ 4332/4333	06/23/86	0515 a.m.	106	False Crawl	
#16	✓ 4332/4333	06/25/86	0530 a.m.	106	Nest	138
#17	✓ 4335/4336	07/08/86	0710 a.m.	125	False Crawl	
#18	✓ 4324/4325	07/14/86	1137 p.m.	97.5	False Crawl	
#19	✓ 4337/4338	07/14/86	0530 a.m.	103	Nest	86
#20	✓ 4313/4314	07/15/86	1110 p.m.	132.5	False Crawl	
#21	✓ 4317/4318	07/16/86	1215 a.m.	100	Nest	94
#22	✓ 4337/4338	08/09/86	0420 a.m.	103	Nest	93

ROCKY 4327 4/27 PHILIPPINE BASCO, BATAWE 72

REMAINING - 4339-4350 (12)

11 Tagged

	April '86	May '86	June '86	July '86	August '86
Number of Turtles Tagged	One (1)	Five (5)	Three (3)	Two (2) =	①①
Tagged Turtle Nests		two (2)	Eight (8)	Two (2)	One (1)
Tagged Turtle False Crawls	One (1)	Four (4)	One (1)	Three (3)	

COCONUT CRAB SURVEY - 1986  
 Oroluk, Atoll, Pohnpei State  
 Federated States of Micronesia

	STATION #01	STATION #02	STATION #03	
Week 1	Date 04/23/86			Total #None
	Time 0827 p.m.	Time 0837 p.m.	Time 0837 p.m.	
	#CC -0-	#CC -0-	#CC -0-	
Week 2	Date 04/30/86			Total #None
	Time 1023 p.m.	Time 1033 p.m.	Time 1030 p.m.	
	#CC -0-	#CC -0-	#CC -0-	
Week 3	Date 05/07/86			Total #26
	Time 0951 p.m.	Time 0947 p.m.	Time 0942 p.m.	
	#CC 18	#CC 6	#CC 2	
Week 4	Date 05/14/86			Total #4
	Time 0851 p.m.	Time 0854	Time 0856	
	#CC 1	#CC 2	#CC 1	
Week 5	Date 05/22/86			Total #42
	Time 0931 p.m.	Time 0936 p.m.	Time 0934 p.m.	
	#CC 20	#CC 4	#CC 18	
Week 6	Date 05/28/86			Total #47
	Time 0927 p.m.	Time 0920 p.m.	Time 0923 p.m.	
	#CC 29	#CC 3	#CC 15	
Week 7	Date 06/04/86			Total #24
	Time 0936 p.m.	Time 0929 p.m.	Time 0934	
	#CC 12	#CC 1	#CC 11	
Week 8	Date 06/12/86			Total #22
	Time 1045 p.m.	Time 1007 p.m.	Time 1014 p.m.	
	#CC 12	#CC 3	#CC 7	



## Turtle Nest Hatch Rate Monitoring

Methods: Four foot wide 1/4" mesh security wire fencing was placed around a nest after a turtle laid eggs. The fence was sunk approximately 20 inches into the ground. Care was taken to insure that the fence did not touch or damage any eggs. The nest was then monitored nightly. The number of hatched turtles were counted, and approximately one week following the hatch, the nest was examined to determine the fate of all the eggs.

### Fence 1

Nest hatched June 30, examined July 8

- 1-turtle with left forward flipper deformed but alive (released in water, swimming slowly with zig-zag motion)
- 1-turtle fully developed, out of shell but dead
- 97-empty egg shells, not counting pieces of small shell or just half (75 hatchlings observed)
- 7-eggs black inside, smelling like dead frog
- 4-eggs with fully developed turtle inside (dead) with egg yolk appearing red in color
- 1-egg with yellow merky liquid inside, no turtle
- 4-eggs with yellow yolk and small turtles inside
- 1-egg with yolk and no turtle, but red color on one side of the yolk

### Fence 2

Date hatched: July 26, 1986 Nest examined August 7, 1986

- 42-hatchlings observed
- 8-eggs with solid yellow yolk and red color on side of yolk, no turtle
- 5-eggs with fully developed small turtle inside, egg yolk still large
- 2-eggs with watery yolk, no turtle evident
- 15-eggs with bones of small turtles and many worms
- 3-eggs missing (maybe mixed with others)

OROLUK TURTLE PROJECT - SEPTEMBER 1986

by Clay Edson

Arriving on April 20 at Oroluk atoll was a sad day for me and my partner. Those residents of Oroluk already killed three female turtles to take them with the ship back to Pohnpei. Later we found out that those turtles were not tagged. Also we found out that two of our turtles that we tagged (tag #4303, 4304, and 4305) last year were killed and eaten last August. We collected the tags and encouraged them not to kill any turtles with tags.

We started night patrolling on the 21st of April till August 17, 1986. Every 15 minutes we walked up and down the beach looking for crawl tracks or turtles on the beach. Lights have to be dimmed down and noise reduced.

If we spotted female turtle came up to nest, we made sure the turtle did not see us. Disturbances will cause the turtle the crawl back to the ocean and maybe come back next week. We waited for the turtle to make her nest, and when she started laying eggs, we counted how many eggs were laid. After the turtle was finished laying eggs and started covering the nest, we measured her carapace and looked for any identifiable marks or tags. When she finished covering her nest, we turned her over and put two tags, one on each front flipper. After tagging we recorded all information on data sheet and let the turtle go.

Humerus bones were collected, noting date and location found and also date discarded when known. All humerus bones that we collected were close to the cook house. [These bones were forwarded to Dr. George Balazs of NMFS in Honolulu for research on determining age of turtles based on humerus bones.]

B. Nest Protection and hatching observations

We made three wiremesh fences about 3 ft. in diameter 4 feet tall to cover three of those nests that we previously counted the eggs and date they were layed. We dug around the nest to about 1 1/2 to 2 ft deep, to keep ghost crabs away from the eggs.

We checked the fenced nests up to 58 days after laying to see if those eggs already hatch. It takes about 2 months for those eggs to hatch but it can be 1-2 days before or after the 60 days.

After the eggs hatched, we counted them and put the numbers in our data form. We continued with headstarting procedures. If the nest was close to the water we just let them crawl to the ocean on their own. If the nest was way inland, we collected the hatchlings in a bucket and took them closer to the water. One of us had to get in the water and shine his flashlight into the water so when the hatchlings were put on the sand they crawled into the water where the light was. To make sure those hatchlings get to the water, those ghost crabs must be killed.

Then after 10 days, we dug up the nest to see how many unhatched eggs, egg with worms inside, undeveloped eggs and also spoiled ones. We did this to show us the birth rate and hatching rate.

### C. Methods and result-coconut crab

Coconut crab is one of the food sources for those Kapinga people on Oroluk atoll. They get and eat them almost all those times when they don't have can meat or fish.

Coconut crab population surveying started on the April 25, 1986 and ended on the June 12, 1986. We started on three (3) selected stations close to the huts. Ropes were used to make three (3) 20 square feet areas in those selected places so the next time, the survey would be on the same spot. Finely chopped coconut meat from 6 coconuts were put inside each station one (1) hour before we counted the coconut crabs. This survey was done only once a week.

For the first and second week we got no counts on all the stations so we moved the stations more closer to the other side of the island. The third week we started seeing crabs in all three stations. This survey continued for 6 more weeks.

Coconut crab estimate =  $\frac{51 \text{ average \# of crabs}}{60 \text{ average sq. feet}}$

We found out that the population of rats appears to be rapidly increasing and this increasing rat population appears to be decreasing the coconut crab population. Last year the rat population was less than this year. Residents of Oroluk estimate that the population of rats almost tripled the number of last year. They also said that those rats not only give the coconut crab hard problems but also they eat their bananas and food supplies.

Rats and harvesting of female coconut crabs will not conserve the crabs on Oroluk. This year we found coconut crab feeding in breadfruit trees at day time, which is not found last year.

Pohnpei Agriculture Station should be involved in this matter. Chemicals and rat traps should be sent there. The chemicals should be only effective to the rats. Cats might minimize the increasing of the rats.

### → D. Recommendation for how and where to improve turtle nesting areas

Turtles nest only where there is sand. The sand texture has to be good. We're sure that the turtles came from the lagoon to nest cause it is closer to the beach and also not too many huge rocks. Nesting is only happens at night time when the tide is high. Nests are sometimes made in the tidal line areas but mostly in or above the vegetation line.

*Done* Most of the sandy part of the beach is where the residents built their pig pens and some parts have trees with low branches that sometimes make it hard for the turtles to get inland to nest. Also, there may

be too many coconut trees in the nesting areas.

Recommendations

Those pig pens and the coconut trees should be removed to the rocky part of the island. Clean bushes and trees that are on the beach and nesting areas. Also this nesting areas should be avoided by the residents so that they will not disturb those eggs under the sand. Pigs and other pets should be confined to avoid to disturbing eggs. Minimize noise and light at night.

GREEN TURTLE TAGGING AND OBSERVATION - 1986

11 TURTLES

Oroluk, Atoll, Pohnpei State  
Federated States of Micronesia

Turtle #	Tag #	Date	Time	Carapace Length (CM)	Activity	# Eggs
#01	4313/4314	04/30/86	0601 a.m.	132.5	False Crawl	
#02	"	05/04/86	0227 a.m.	132.5	False Crawl	
#03	4315/4316	05/16/86	0646 a.m.	140.5	False Crawl	
#04	4317/4318	05/21/86	0130 a.m.	100	False Crawl	
#05	4319/4320	05/22/86	0630 a.m.	110	False Crawl	
#06	4321/4323	05/22/86	0655 a.m.	100	Nest	92
#07	4324/4325	05/27/86	0616 a.m.	97.5	Nest	77
#08	4326/4327	06/02/86	0530 a.m.	99	Nest	72
#09	4329/4331	06/03/86	1211 a.m.	110	Nest	127
#10	4321/4323	06/05/86	0220 a.m.	100	Nest	60
#11	4324/4325	06/08/86	0200 a.m.	97.5	Nest	103
#12	4315/4316	06/10/86	0210 a.m.	140.5	Nest	116
#13	4321/4323	06/20/86	0345 a.m.	100	Nest	86
#14	4324/4325	06/21/86	1232 a.m.	97.5	Nest	82
#15	4332/4333	06/23/86	0515 a.m.	106	False Crawl	
#16	4332/4333	06/25/86	0530 a.m.	106	Nest	138
#17	4335/4336	07/08/86	0710 a.m.	125	False Crawl	
#18	4324/4325	07/14/86	1137 p.m.	97.5	False Crawl	
#19	4337/4338	07/14/86	0530 a.m.	103	Nest	86
#20	4313/4314	07/15/86	1110 p.m.	132.5	False Crawl	
#21	4317/4318	07/16/86	1215 a.m.	100	Nest	94
#22	4337/4338	08/09/86	0420 a.m.	103	Nest	93

4327 PHILIPINES  
 4/18/87  
 KENTING NAT. PARK  
 TAIWAN  
 4/93  
 BASCO  
 PHILIPINES

	April '86	May '86	June '86	July '86	August '86
Number of Turtles Tagged	One (1)	Five (5)	Three (3)	Two (2)	One (1)
Tagged Turtle Nests		two (2)	Eight (8)	Two (2)	One (1)
Tagged Turtle False Crawls	One (1)	Four (4)	One (1)	Three (3)	

AIRMAIL



To, HIMB  
UNIVERSITY  
HAWAII 96744

MARIA FALCES  
Basco, Batanes  
Philippines



MT 1346  
HIMB UNIVERSITY  
HAWAII, 96744

- T-shirt sent 5/8/93  
- typed letter + postal certificates sent 5/24/93

Baseo, Batanes  
Philippines

April 12, 1993

Dear Sir,

We caught a turtle here in Baseo,  
Batanes, Philippines with a pin with the  
following writings: WRITE HIMB  
UNIVERSITY  
HAWAII, 96744

on the other side of the pin is the bold  
no. 4327 6/2/86 OROLUK, Pohnpei, FSM Nesting 4326?  
CCL=99cm  
NAN-WAN Bay, KENTING, National Park 4/18/87  
Released 5/7/87

I am writing sir hoping this might  
have a signitance or importance to  
you.

Hoping for your answer sir.

Maxia Falces  
Baseo, Batanes  
Philippines.

HIMB  
APR 27





U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Fisheries Science Center Honolulu Laboratory  
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396  
(808)943-1221 • Fax: (808)943-1290

May 24, 1993 F/SWC2:GHB:FLF  
MARIA-11LGHB

Miss Maria Falces  
Basco, Batanes  
Philippines

Dear Maria Falces:

Thank you again for your letter of April 12, 1993 reporting the sea turtle (Chelonia mydas) with our tag number 4327 captured in Basco, Batanes, Philippines. We are most appreciative that you took the time to write to us about this important discovery. I trust that you received the shirt with the sea turtle design that I mailed to you last week as a small reward. In the near future, you will also be receiving a letter of appreciation and shirt as a reward from the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme.

The tagging history for the turtle that you reported is as follows. The turtle is an adult female originally tagged on June 2, 1986, while nesting on the small island of Oroluk, Pohnpei, in the Federated States of Micronesia. Oroluk is located in the Pacific Ocean at about 7 degrees north latitude, 155 degrees east longitude. The turtle was marked for identification with two tags, 4326 on the left front flipper and 4327 on the right front flipper. She measured 99 cm (40 inches) in length along the midline curvature of her upper shell. During the following year, on May 7, 1987, the turtle was reported captured alive at the southern-most tip of Taiwan in Nan-Wan Bay of the Kenting National Park. The people who caught her reported that she was in good condition and weighed 115 kg (253 lbs). In keeping with the religious customs of the people in that area, the turtle was held until May 7, 1987, when it was released back into the sea. We have not had any additional reports about this turtle until receiving your interesting letter.

It would be very helpful if you could tell us more about where the turtle was captured, how it was captured, and the condition it was in when captured. Did the turtle appear to be healthy? Was it captured in a net, speared, or caught by hand? Was it used as food? Do the people in Basco capture many turtles? If so, are they all as large as this one? Have the people ever captured other turtles with tags (pins) attached to them? Any additional information that you can provide will be welcomed and appreciated.

I have enclosed two Universal Postal Union coupons that you should be able to exchange at your local postal facility for the cost of an airmail letter to me. Also, if you would like to have another shirt identical to the one I sent, perhaps for one of the fishermen, I would be pleased to make it available. I look forward to receiving another letter from you.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs  
Zoologist

cc SPREP, Apia  
S. Geermans, Brisbane  
Enclosures



George H. Balass  
National Marine Fisheries  
Service, Honolulu Laboratory  
2570 Dole Street  
Honolulu Hawaii

①

Salwyn Gae  
Saint John the Baptist  
Mineri Village  
Santa Cruz  
Tamatu Province

23rd August 1993

Dearest,

George, thank you once again for taking the time to write to me regarding the sea turtle with tags X378 and X379. I am sorry I could not reply your letter at the earliest possible, due to the fact that I had just returned from Nupani Island where the turtle was found, back to Santa Cruz a distance of about 30 kmiles. upon receiving your letter I could not find an possible transport to give me reply of the letter, as communication is very difficult. however thank you for enclosing the same of 2 dollars us and for informing Susie Goermans about the turtle, she had just send me her letter with a beautiful t-shirt. So thank you once again for informing her. I am please once again to inform you that the same turtle was found or caught again by me on the 10th January 1993 while diving for fish at night. the turtle was caught sleeping near a huge stone, this time I could not save its life any more. the turtle was kill and eaten the same day it was found found but the tag numbers are with me. greatful if you could inform me again of what to do with it. because somebody working in the fisheries department here in the Solomons what's me to give him the tag numbers and he will pay me with an amount of five hundred dollars \$500, however I did not give him the tag numbers despite the big amount. finally greatful to hear from you again and I will be very happy if you could send me some some more t-shirt because people in my village really like the advertisement on

Mr. George H. Balazs  
National Marine Fisheries  
Service, Honolulu Laboratory  
2570 Dole Street  
Honolulu Hawaii, 96822-2576.

(2)

the t shirt. please send me the following sizes  
medium and small size. I look forward to hear  
from you soon, or later sorry I did not answer  
the questions because you had already ~~ans~~  
answered it. but I look forward to answer future  
questions if arise from you again.

hear from you soon  
regards

Dalwyn Sae

Sae

HIMB  
APR 27

143  
- t-shirt sent 4/29/93  
- Second letter sent 5/24/93  
AUG 7 1993

Saint John the Baptist  
Minevi Village  
Santa Cruz  
Ternetu Province  
Solomon Islands  
8th April 1993.

Dear,

Sir, I am please to inform you  
and your staffs that one of the  
turtle which you had put a tag  
on had been caught by me on  
the 9th December 1992. The tag  
numbers on both shoulders are X378  
and X379, having identified the tag  
numbers the turtle was released.

numbers on both shoulders are X378  
and X379, having identified the tag  
numbers the turtle was later released.  
The turtle was found on a tiny island  
call NUPANI in the Temotu Province, Solomon  
Islands. Sir I could <sup>not really</sup> describe the real measure  
ment, of the turtle all I could say here is  
that it is real big indeed and could be  
the biggest turtle I ever seen in my life.  
finally Sir, I understand that you always  
give a reward to anyone who finds any  
of the turtles that you had put a tag on.  
Therefore in that same respect I would request  
you to let me know of what my reward would  
be. And if you need more information on  
this please write to me on the above address.  
I do hope that you will write to me  
as soon as you receive my letter.

regards, Selwyn Sae



[aw] OCT 6 1993

Suzie Geermans  
South Pacific Regional Environment Programme  
C/- Queensland Department of Environment & Heritage  
PO Box 155  
Brisbane Albert Street  
QLD 4002 AUSTRALIA

Ph : (617) 227.7437  
Fax : (617) 227.6386

9 July 1993

Maria Falces  
Basco  
Batan Island  
PHILIPPINES

Actually captured  
on 4-15-87  
then released  
5-7-87

Inconel  
HIMB

Dear Miss Falces

I refer to the marine turtle tagged 4327 that was captured in Basco.

This was an adult female green turtle, tagged while nesting on Oroluk Island in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (see enclosed map) on 2 June 1986. This turtle was previously captured on 7 May 1987 in Nan-Way Bay, Taiwan, where it was released alive back into the sea.

The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is involved with the conservation and management of sea turtles within the South Pacific Region. SPREP are funding turtle tagging programs throughout the South Pacific in order to learn more about the biology of the species and to determine migratory paths of turtles. Any information you can supply us regarding tagged turtles is very important to our understanding of these animals.

Enclosed is a page with some questions regarding the turtle you found. If you could answer the questions and return it to the address provided, it would be appreciated.

Thank you for telling us about the turtle tag. Enclosed are some turtle identification sheets and a t-shirt as a reward for sending in the information.

Regards

Suzie Geermans

Suzie Geermans  
Turtle Conservation Consultant  
South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

cc. Donald David, MRD, Pohnpei  
Adrienne Farago, SPREP, Western Samoa  
George Balazs, NMFS, Hawaii

Itbayat, Batanes 1002  
Philippines  
October 10, 1985

The Mimb University  
Hawaii, 96744

Gentlemen:

I am pleased to inform you that we caught a sea male  
turtle last October 6, 1985. It has a ring in one of its front  
feathers and it reads as follows:

Write Mimb University  
Hawaii, 96744  
3385

If you are interested to further information, I am willing  
to go for further details. Regards.

Very respectfully,



NEO VILLA

6/7 & 6/13 & 6/15/84 NESTING ON EAST IS. FFS  
Tagged by me, 6/7 3385 LFL S-93.6cm  
- No eggs confirmed - ∴ ONLY ONE TAG APPLIED  
NOT SEEN AGAIN AFTER 6/15.

FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS TO

ITBAYAT IS. - AT LEAST 4600 miles  
(7350 km)

FUKIEN

YANGTUNG

CHOU (anton)

Chou Chiang (Canon R.)

HOANG KONG

Shan-t'ou

Chang-shan Shao

Yeh-shan Shao

Pratas Is.

Pratas Rf.

Belen Sh.

SIA

REEFS

Intime Gp

Lincoln I

Macclesfield Bank

Scarborough SAI

South Bk

Marie Louise Is.

N Danger

West York I

Lodiar Bk

Nanshan I

Mischief

Carnegie SAI

Palawan Passag

DANGEROUS GROUND

The area enclosed by the dotted line has not been surveyed on 2/19

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STRAIT

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H I N A S E A

MINDORO STR

MINDORO

CALAMIAN GP

PANAY

NEGROS

BOHOL

S U T H S E A

Fu-chou

Tung-chuan Tao

Hai-tao Tao

Hsiak Kak

Kyuko

Rokuko

Yaito

Kasho To

Q Keto Sho

BASHI CHANNEL

BALINTANG CHANNEL

Babuyan I

Babuyan I

San Fernando

Lingayon

Manila

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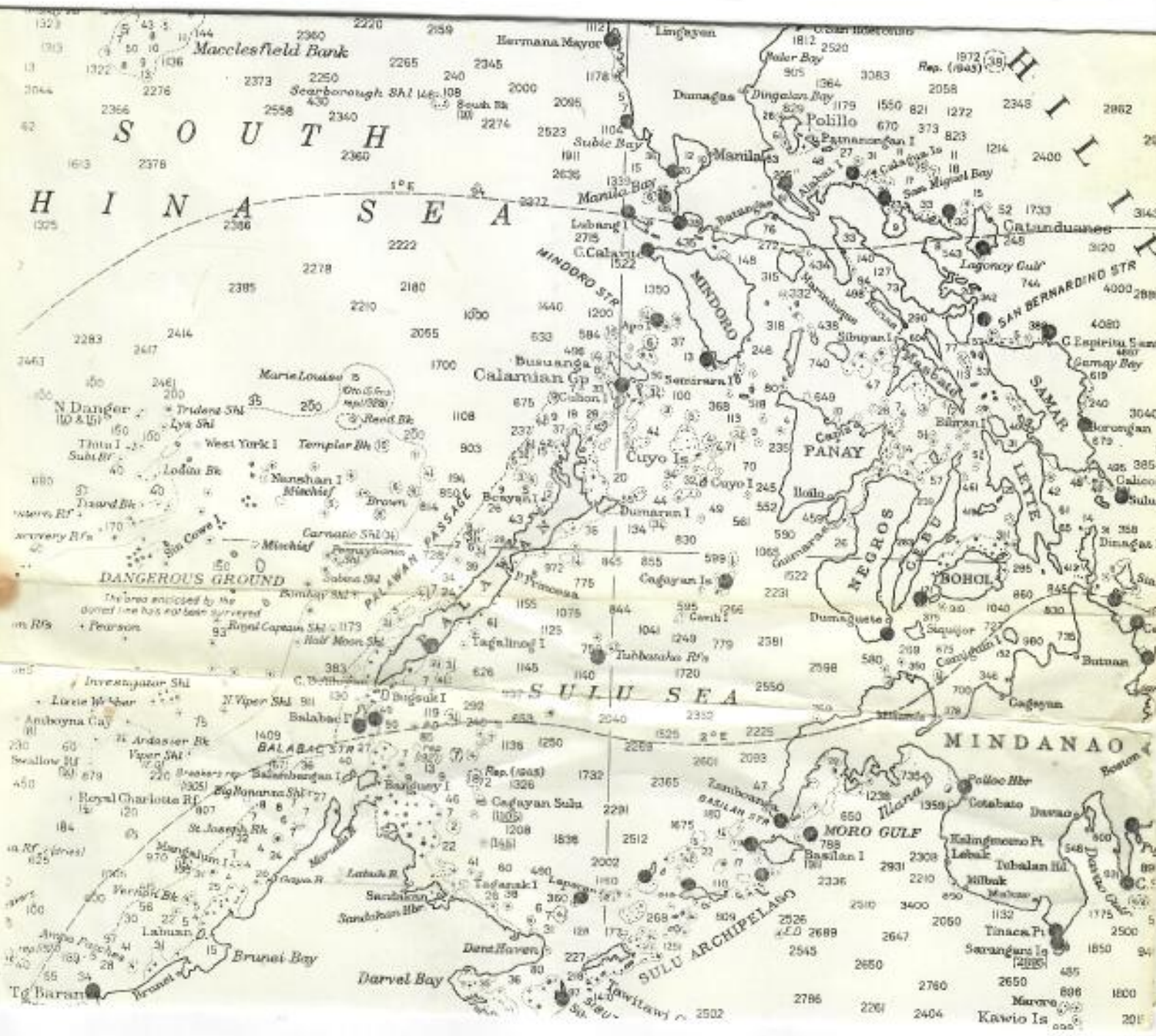
Manila

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Manila





**DANGEROUS GROUND**  
The area enclosed by the dotted line has not been surveyed on R/S - Pearson

**MINDANAO**  
Palace Mbr  
Cotabato  
Davao  
Kaliguayano Pt  
Lebak  
Tubalan Mbr  
Milak  
Tinaca Pt  
Sarangani Is  
Maroro  
Kawio Is

November 15, 1985

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Neo Villa  
Itbayat, Batanes 1002  
Philippines

Dear Mr. Villa:

We were most pleased to read your letter dated October 10, 1985 which just arrived here yesterday. Thank you very much for taking the time to report the capture of one of our tagged sea turtles, number 3385. I tagged this animal at East Island in the French Frigate Shoals on June 7, 1984. French Frigate Shoals is located about 500 miles from Honolulu in the northwestern portion of the Hawaiian Archipelago. The area is a famous breeding ground for many kinds of seabirds, as well as the green sea turtle and the Hawaiian monk seal.

Your recovery of this tagged turtle represents the most distant report we have ever received since tagging started at French Frigate Shoals in the early 1960's. We are therefore most anxious to hear from you again regarding further information about the turtle, exactly where and how it was captured, and the condition it was in. Your assistance will be most valuable in helping us to learn more about the biology of these interesting animals. My questions are as follows:

1. How was the turtle captured? By hand, net, harpoon, or what fishing method?
2. Was the turtle in good health when captured? Did it seem normal, or did it show signs of sickness, disease, or injury?
3. Approximately how large was the turtle? An estimate of its weight, or the length of the shell, would be appreciated.
4. Was the turtle caught in an area where other turtles of this same kind regularly live? What was the turtle doing when captured? Feeding, sleeping, or laying eggs?
5. If the turtle was butchered and cleaned to be eaten, what kind of food material did you find in its stomach?

I am sorry that it has taken over a month for me to be able to respond to you, but your letter to us must have been delayed in the mail. You mailed it to the correct address shown on the tag. However, my current direct mailing address is:

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

Please write to me at this address, sending your letter by airmail. I have enclosed U.S. \$2.00 to cover the cost of your airmail postage. Also, in my next letter I will be sending you a large color poster showing all the different kinds of sea turtles, as well as several booklets and other literature about sea turtles.

Again, we greatly appreciate receiving your important letter, and anxiously look forward to hearing from you again.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs  
Zoologist

Enclosure

bc: Balazs  
HL

29 MAR 2004

Itbayat, Batanes 1002  
Philippines  
November 26, 1985

Mr. George H. Balazs  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
P. O. Box 3830  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

Dear Mr. Balazs:

This has reference to your letter dated November 15, 1985 which just arrived here yesterday. In compliance with your said letter, I hereby narrate the story of the said turtle.

On October 6, 1985, I go fishing in the Southwestern of Itbayat using my improvised spear with sling, I saw the said turtle eating sea weeds. As I go nearer to it, it does not mind me, so I just held it. I am keeping its tag bearing number 3385.

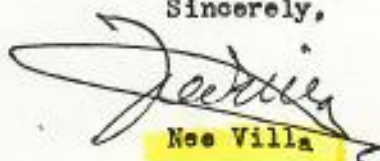
Answers of your questions:

1. I caught the turtle by hand.
2. Yes, the turtle is in good health when captured. It seems normal, but, as if it is weak, hungry and exhausted.
3. The width of the shell is 28 inches and the weight of the entire turtle is approximately 75 kilos.
4. It is feeding itself with sea weeds when captured. Turtles of this same kind regularly live in that area where I caught the said turtle. However, they could not go ashore in our place as it has no sand in the surroundings, unlike in the northern small islands where almost all are surrounded by sand. Anyway, the captured turtle is a male. During the month of June, July and August, female turtles usually go ashore and lay eggs in the northern islands, so, we go and hunt there.
5. Since turtles' meat is a special for us to eat, we butchered the said turtle and ate some of its meat in the stomach uncooked. We cooked some of it with simple ingredients.

Itbayat is the Northernmost inhabited island of the Philippines and it is often affected by strong typhoon. So, mailing is sometimes delayed. During fine weather, our only means of transportation is a motorized small wooden made vessel going to Basco, the capital of Batanes whereon regular flights of airplane is four times per week vice versa to Manila.

Writing you again, and advance Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

  
Nee Villa

December 22, 1985

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Neo Villa  
Itbayat, Batanes 1002  
Philippines

Dear Mr. Villa:

I very much appreciated hearing from you again about the tagged turtle you caught at your island of Itbayat. Thank you for answering my questions in such a careful manner.

As promised in my last letter, I am sending you a color poster showing the different kinds of sea turtles, as well as several publications you may find interesting. If the school on your island would also like to have educational materials on sea turtles, I would be pleased to send them at no cost. Do many people speak and write English on your island? What language is commonly used?

I have a few more questions about the tagged turtle which I hope you won't mind my asking.

1. How were you able to tell that the turtle was a male?
2. Has anyone else in your area ever caught a turtle with a tag?
3. How many turtles go ashore to lay eggs in the northern islands during the months of June, July, and August? How many turtles can you catch there in one day? Do you hunt both the male and the female turtles in the northern islands?
4. What is the name of the seaweed you found in the stomach of the tagged turtle? Is it a kind that the people of Itbayat regularly eat? If you have a small piece of the seaweed, perhaps you could dry it on paper and mail it to me with your next letter.

Again, thank you for your helpful letter. If there is any way I can be of assistance to you here in Hawaii, please do not hesitate to ask me. I send my best regards for the Christmas season and the New Year.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs  
Zoologist

Enclosures

cc: G. Balazs  
HL

RAPA NUI JOURNAL P.O. BOX 6774 LOS OSOS CA 93412-6774

Georgia Lee, Ph.D. Editor/Publisher  
FAX (805) 534-9301 ☎ 528-6279

L.G. Eldredge  
Pacific Science Assn  
PO Box 17801  
Honolulu, HI 96817

16 October 1992

Dear Mr. Eldredge,

Thanks for writing. I will put you on our mailing list so we can continue to have notices in Pacific Research Titles.

About Theroux's book, yes there are legends about the god Tangaroa arriving to the island in the disguise of a seal. Also, in Metroux's book, Ethnology of Easter Island. The islanders call this creature 'pakia'. As unlikely as it seems, a leopard seal tooth was found in an excavation on the north coast (see C. Smith, page 263 in Heyerdahl's Reports of the Norwegian Expedition, volume 1, 1961) and some seal bones were dug up at Anakena (J-M Ramirez, personal communication 1988). Surely the arrival of a seal would be an extraordinary event. During my research on Easter, I documented 23 petroglyphs that appear to represent a seal and were identified by the islanders as pakia. When I first began to encounter this motif, I was really puzzled because I didn't believe seals would be in the area, but there were the forms, carved in the rocks— and pakia is Rapanui for seal. And then there is that legend which specifically mentions seal/Tangaroa. So sometime in the past, this event occurred. Emory (1947 Tuamotuan Religious Structures, Bishop Museum) mentions marae for seals in the Tuamotus.

Lee - 191

It is possible to extrapolate from the example of turtles: there are many beautiful petroglyphs of turtles but they are a great rarity today; only one has come ashore in the past twenty years. It was immediately eaten as were the eggs it laid. Imagine centuries of such behavior and soon turtles no longer came. The islanders say that when the king died, the turtles left forever.

You can write to Ramirez at Museo Fonck, Casilla 951, Vina del Mar, Chile. He can handle English rather well.

I would be most interested in your thoughts and opinions about seals and Easter. Did you know the islanders caught a huge tiger shark off the island a few years back? I have a picture of the jaws—they ate the rest.

Best regards,