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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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LAND
STATE PARKS

October 1, 2012

Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Coll:

Re: NOAA-NMFS-2012-0154 Ninety Day Petition Finding,
Request for Information, And Initiation of Status Review

The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources ("DLNR") received your August 1, 2012 Federal Register Notice: Ninety Day Petition Finding, Request for Information, And Initiation of Status Review (NOAA-NMFS-2012-0154). The State submits the following comments on the request for scientific and commercial information pertaining to green turtles and potential critical habitat.

To assist the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") in its status review of green turtles (as currently listed) to determine whether the proposed action is warranted, and to examine green turtles globally with regard to application of the "distinct population segment" ("DPS") policy in light of significant new information since the 1978 listing of the species, DLNR submits the following scientific and commercial information pertaining to green turtles ("honu") in State waters around the islands of Hawaii.

Commercial landings of green turtles in State-regulated commercial fisheries have been documented since 1948. The following figures show annual commercial honu landings reported on commercial fishing reports from at least 3 fishermen (Figure 1, Figure 2).

In addition to commercial fisheries reports, the State regulated direct takes of honu for home consumption under Regulation 36 from 1974 to 1982. Under Regulation 36 (as implemented by the Hawaii Division of Fish and Game), residents were allowed to take turtles of 36 inches straight carapace length or greater, provided they had a permit from the State Board of Land and Natural Resources ("BLNR") and adhered to the specific requirements of the regulation.

*Need of this letter
copy to DLNR
Sottawai
Thrust of letter
Team identity*

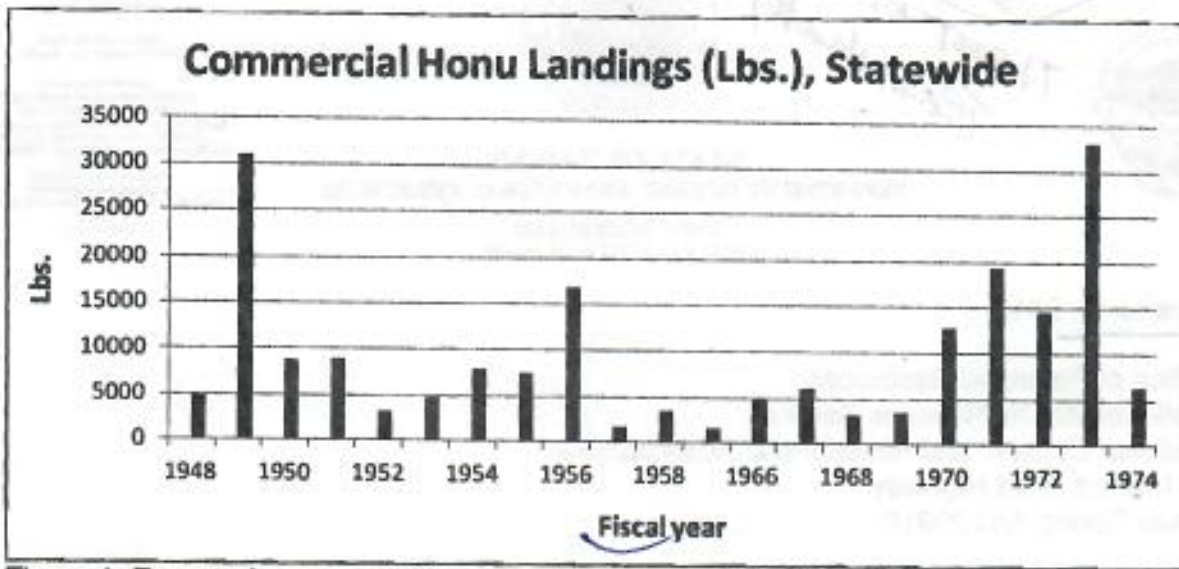


Figure 1. Reported commercial honu landings in pounds in Hawaii from 1948-1974.

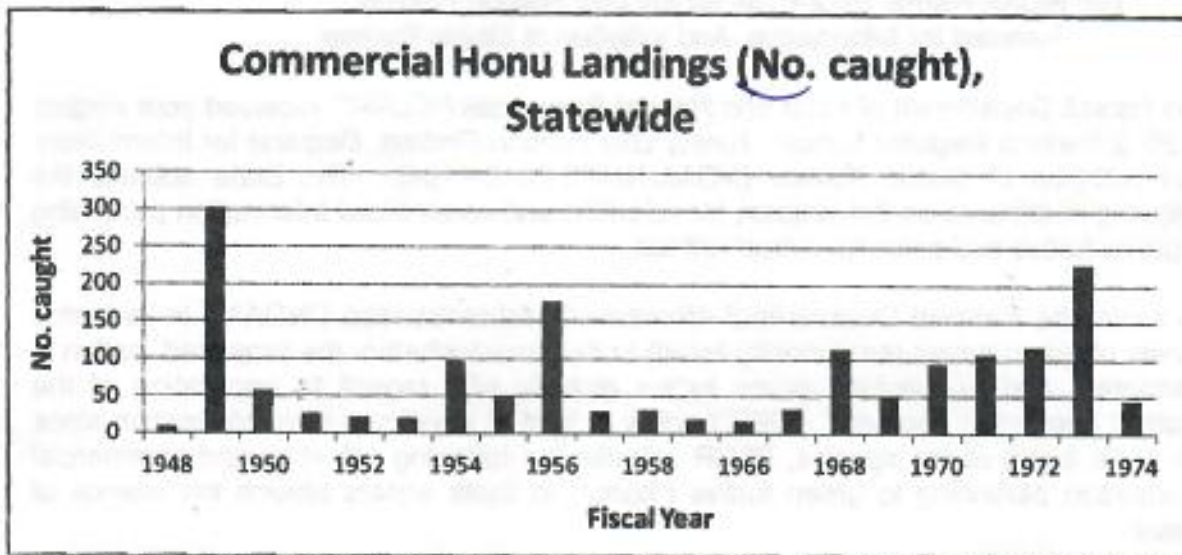


Figure 2. Reported commercial honu landings in numbers caught in Hawaii from 1948 to 1974.

Since 1982 (when Regulation 36 was incorporated into Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 13-124) and with honu protected under the Endangered Species Act ("ESA") (1978), the Federal government became the lead agency in honu management. DLNR continues to assist with nesting and emergency response statewide.

The petition was submitted by a Hawaii-based organization. The Hawaiian green turtle in particular is being evaluated as a Distinct Population-Segment designation. Therefore, the State requests that the DLNR representative be included on the biological review team when it is formed.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment on the ninety day finding and status review.

We look forward to working with you throughout this important process.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM J. AILA, Jr.
Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources State of Hawaii

cc: Governor, State of Hawaii