



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
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F/SWC2:ghb

Mr. Richard Namel  
Agriculture Department  
P.M.B. OHO  
Tagabe  
Vila, Vanuatu  
South Pacific

Dear Mr. Namel:

Thank you very much for your recent letter reporting the capture of a tagged sea turtle (S111-S114) on 10 February 1995 at the island of Ancityum in Vanuatu. As with the tag resighting you relayed to us last year, we are most appreciative to receive this valuable information. I understand from your letter that Analgauhat villagers captured S111 while she was sleeping at night underwater with other smaller turtles.

Turtle S111, an adult female green turtle (Chelonia mydas), was originally tagged at Scilly Atoll, northwest of Tahiti in French Polynesia, on 22 October 1991. The turtle was laying eggs on the uninhabited islet of Motu Honu within the atoll. At that time, turtle S111 measured 106 cm in curved length along the back of her upper shell. Your report represents the first time this turtle has been resighted since she was tagged 4.5 years ago.

As we have known for some time, Scilly Atoll is a very important nesting site for green turtles living at foraging sites (such as Ancityum) throughout the entire South Pacific region. Unfortunately, the number of turtles nesting each year at Scilly has declined considerably over the past 50 years. The knowledge that there are now fewer sea turtles is the major reason that SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme) has declared 1995 as the "Year of the Sea Turtle in the Pacific." I have enclosed some literature describing this educational and public awareness campaign. Perhaps there are some activities mentioned that you may want to undertake in your own area. Please feel free to contact SPREP (Box 240, Apia, Western Samoa) for further assistance. I am sure they will be pleased to help you. SPREP will also be sending you another t-shirt to thank you for telling us about tagged turtle S111.

A video about the problems of conserving sea turtles in the Pacific is being distributed by SPREP, as part of their Year of the Sea Turtle campaign. In the video there are scenes taken on Motu Honu on 21 October 1991 showing turtle S111 crawling back to the water after laying eggs. You can obtain a copy of this excellent video by contacting SPREP.



Again, thank you for taking the time to write to me. I look forward to hearing from you again when more information becomes available.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs  
Zoologist and Leader,  
Marine Turtle Research Program

cc  
S. Miller, SPREP  
P. Siu/J.-P. Landret, Tahiti  
C. Limpus  
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