



Splash! ...continued

When fishing was allowed in the NWHI, Hawai'i fishermen—working on their own dime—would collect derelict nets and line and make reports to officials.

“All the years previous to this silly closure, the Hawaiian longline fleet, and before that the eight bottomfishing permitted boats, would spot and report to the Coast Guard, DLNR, NOAA exactly where these hideous, derelict ghost nets are. Surging back and forth on beautiful live coral, killing sea turtles, sea birds, reef fish and sharks.”

Bob lamented the days when the fishing industry worked with government. This was “called industry working with government instead of being adversarial by nature!”

How does Bob envision the future?

“If we do not voice our opinion, to allow our own state to manage, monitor, care for and oversee our own waters,” Bob pleaded, “all the fresh fish we all love so much will simply come from foreign fleets! How tragic...”

Turtles and Whales

The Associated Press reported that NOAA has apologized for dumping dead Hawaiian green sea turtles in the Waimanalo Gulch on O'ahu.

NOAA Research Biologist T. Todd Jones was quoted as saying, “The perception that the animals were left and they weren't cared for, and that's what we apologize for.”

Debbie Herrera, a board member with Malama Na Honu, a turtle advocacy group, told the AP that turtles are “really respected so this is surprising.”

NOAA said it handles 150 to 200 dead turtles a year. Of the three turtles dumped at the dump, one was killed by a boat and two died of illnesses.

In other news, NOAA, the same turtle-dumping organization, said that Hawaiians must pay for an illegal whale funeral. NOAA charged two Hawaiian practitioners with violating the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act. Their crime was trying to save a dying whale and then when it died, giving it a sea funeral. For being whale-savers, NOAA wants the pair to pay a \$5,000 penalty.

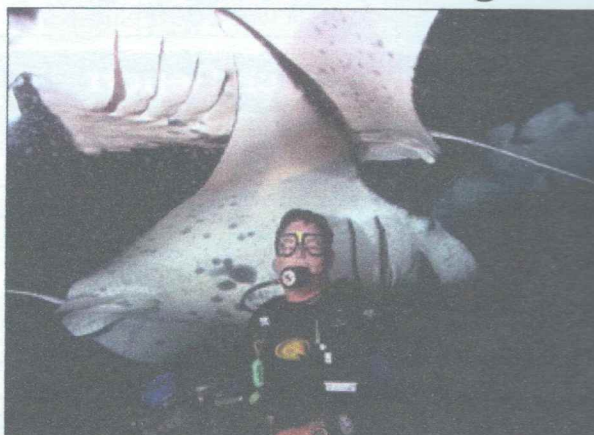
Kai Palaoa is a small Hilo-based Native Hawaiian ocean and whale group. Founder Kealoha Pisciotta and Roxanne Kapuaimohalaikalani Stewart said that on June 10, 2014, they were acting as cultural practitioners when they tried to revive a dying melon-headed whale at Kawaihae, Hawai'i island.

When the whale died on June 11, they gave it a sea burial. Both acts were cited by NOAA as “take” violations. Four months ago, the two were formally charged with an “illegal take and transport” of a marine mammal and assessed a \$5,000 fine.

“We are being forced to defend ourselves, our organization and our culture against NOAA's unjust accusations,” Kealoha said in the news story.

See “Kokua Kai Palaoa Campaign” at kaipalaoa.com/home/ for more information on legal fees and potential fines associated with the NOAA case.

Manta Ray Tour Rules Coming



Keller Laros, AKA Manta Man and founder of Manta Pacific Research Foundation.

Popular manta ray night diving tours off the Kona Coast are undergoing proposed Ocean Recreation Management Area (ORMA) regulation meetings. Makako Bay (Garden Eel Cove) and the nearshore waters fronting Keauhou Bay, the two most popular manta dive sites on Hawai'i island, will be affected.

Keller Laros, aka Manta Man, founder of Manta Pacific Research Foundation, was attending NOAA's “Marine Ecotourism Seminar” on the Conservation of Marine Resources in Honolulu. Keller said that the seminar was “a great opportunity for the manta ray industry to meet with NOAA and discuss the impacts to species and local cultural perspective.”

“I believe that the free market manta ray industry has outgrown itself. Only with government intervention can we preserve this amazing resource for future generations.”

At the seminar, NOAA discussed marine ecotourism as to its economic viability, its impacts to species and local cultural perspective, and how to make it economically viable.

New manta ray regulations will require moorings to promote safe diving and prevent damage. Divers would be required to have permits. Regulations would include limits on lighting and vessel speed, and no scuba diving is allowed, but scuba manta ray tours are allowed to Makako Bay.

All operators hosting manta ray tours at Makako Bay and Makako would need a permit. Permitted commercial operators would be eligible to apply.

There will be one permit per operator. The permit would allow access to Makako Bay or Sheraton Bay. The exact fee for a manta ray permit has not yet been determined.

Keller began naming the manta ray sightings data of Kona manta ray sightings. He said of the need for more manta ray sightings, “The people I talk to are shocked that Hawai'i requires no level of training for in-water snorkel guides. Manta ray passengers rely upon for safety. First aid or CPR training are not required to be a guide. No life guard, no first aid or CPR.”

Got News or Questions?
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surf@mac.com