

March 30, 1988

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. Steve Kaiser
Sea Life Park
Waimanalo, HI 96795

Dear Steve,

As you requested, I recently visited the Kahala Hilton to examine the adult female green turtle showing an abnormal protrusion on her tail. The turtle was basking on the sand bank when I arrived, so I had a good opportunity to look closely at the tail and palpate the protrusion. Although there is a hard core area inside the protrusion, I feel confident in saying that it is not the fibropapilloma disease condition that we are regularly seeing in free-ranging Hawaiian green turtles. The protrusion appears to be more of a "prolapse" that has occurred to the cloaca. I have on several occasions seen similar conditions in green turtles nesting at French Frigate Shoals. I suspect that this results during extrusion of eggs, or possibly from vigorous copulation. In any event, in my opinion, it is not the result of any disease that could be transmitted to Sea Life Park turtles if and when you move the turtle to your facility.

I have asked the caretakers at the Kahala Hilton to keep a close watch on the protrusion to determine if it enlarges, or possibly becomes infected. There is no indication of infection at this time. The turtle was not overly sensitive to the area being palpated.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

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cc: Balazs
HL