

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A-6 Kauai Times, June 22, 1994

Green sea turtle plan is working

Many thanks to Shelly Zeck for her excellent article (6/8/94) describing our newly initiated Hawaiian honu (green sea turtle) tagging project off Poipu. Readers of the *Kauai Times* will now have a much better understanding of the importance of this difficult but rewarding work on behalf of an animal struggling to recover from past decades of over-exploitation.

As mentioned in the article, the study will require several years to complete due to the special biological characteristics of green sea turtles (i.e. vegetarian diet, slow grow, delayed sexual maturity, lengthy reproductive migrations).

The outstanding involvement of The Ocean Recreation Council of Hawaii (Kauai's TORCH chapter) and the State of Hawaii's Division of Aquatic Resources guarantee the ultimate success of this long-term project.

The Honolulu Laboratory of the National Marine Fisheries Service is the lead agency for this research.

The article incorrectly identified me as being affiliated with another federal agency.

Three 1-day expeditions have now been accomplished during the past two months off Kauai's south shore.

This has resulted in the tagging of 26 Hawaiian Honu.

Unfortunately, several of these animals were afflicted with fibropapillomatosis, a debilitating and often fatal disease of sea turtles. The cause of this illness is currently unknown, but work is underway to provide answers.

During this initial work on Kauai, we are especially grateful to Mr. Rick Daley of Adventures West for the use of his boat, time and talents generously contributed to make the work successful and safe.

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