

Balazs (2025) A Look Back and a Look Forward: Honu at Punalu'u and Honu'ea at Honokohau.

From: George Balazs <itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com>

Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025

Subject: A Look Back- The Historical Significance of Punalu'u to Hawaiian Honu Research; and A Look Forward- Hawaiian Hawksbills Honu'ea Free to See : Follow-Ups To My Message of Appreciation and Well Wishes.

Dear Oceania-Pacific Islands Mail Group Recipient- As promised, but with a 20-day delay due to travel to Japan and other happy turtle activities. Aloha, George

Taking a Look Back- The Historical Significance of Punalu'u to Hawaiian Green Turtle Research;

and

Taking a Look Forward- Hawaiian Hawksbills Seeing Them for Free.

Punalu'u In Ka'u on the Island of Hawai'i- Looking Back:

Most folks familiar with the honu of Hawaii know that the systematic nighttime monitoring of nesting at Lalo (French Frigate Shoals) started in June of 1973 and continued consistently for several decades. In the process over time, consensus was gained for the State of Hawaii to ban commercial harvest of honu and enhance the enrichment of conservation awareness by the millions of tourists annually visiting Hawaii. What most folks are far less familiar with is the importance of monitoring honu in their ocean-home foraging range at the culturally special place of Punalu'u in the Ka'u District of Hawai'i Island. Punalu'u is one of a great many honu foraging locations in the Main Hawaiian Islands. The Punalu'u historical initiative was made possible by the outstanding cordial cooperation of the Marine Option Program of the University of Hawaii at Hilo (Drs. Dudley, Hallacher, John Coney & others), the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (UH's HIMB at Coconut Island Moku o Lo'e in Kaneohe Bay), and the UH Sea Grant College Program under the directorship of Dr. Jack Davidson. Looking back over the years, as I am doing at this moment, the start and consistent continuation of periodic study visits to Punalu'u was truly the counterpart companion of monitoring nesting at French Frigate Shoals. I think it's important to recall this point when the history books are written, as they will be, telling about Western-style studies, partnerships, policies, and cultural traditions of Hawaii's honu. For those reasons, and others, I've scanned many hundreds of pages of personal documents of all sorts saved over the decades. They are now on my web site www.GeorgeHBalazs.com accessible to everyone (including libraries) at the following links:

[1970s-1990s Part 1 of 3: Punaluu Kau East Hawaii MOP Sea Grant Projects of George Balazs.](#)

[1970s-1990s Part 2 of 3: Punaluu Kau East Hawaii MOP Sea Grant Projects of George Balazs.](#)

[1970s-1990s Part 3 of 3: Punaluu Kau East Hawaii MOP Sea Grant Projects of George Balazs.](#)

[1970s - 1990s Part 1 of 2: Punaluu-Kau File of George H. Balazs.](#)

[1970s-1990s Part 2 of 2: Punaluu-Kau File of George H. Balazs.](#)

And here are the all-encompassing links to Punalu'u that I've titled "Home of Kauila"-

<https://georgehbalazs.com/himb-historical/home-of-kauila/>

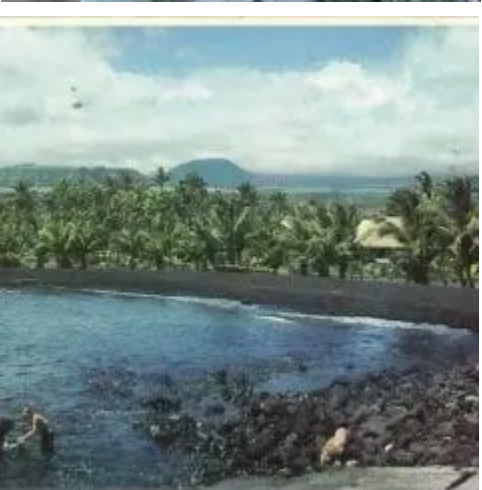
and

<https://georgehbalazs.com/field-notebooks-of-george-h-balazs-5/>

And here are a few of the hundreds of archived photos about the life and times of honu and people at Punalu'u-



Hawaii Marine Biologist George Balazs, second from right, with Arnold Howard and Jeanette Howard, looking at Hawaiian monk seals on the beach. Balazs's wife, Linda, is also present. The photo is for further study, as Jeanette Howard looks on.-Ka'u Ni



Looking Forward- Where to See Hawaiian Honu'ea Hawksbills Easy and For Free:

Honokohau Harbor Hotspot for Hawaiian Hawksbills Honu'ea (HHHHHH). **Yes**, in Honokohau Small Boat Harbor, the famous marina on the Kona Coast of Hawai'i Island. Known for decades as a refuge for numerous green turtles, the harbor's unique habitat (created by clearing solid lava rock inland instead of building breakwaters seaward) is now also regularly frequented by honu'ea, Hawaiian hawksbills of several sizes. All seem healthy and happy living life at this special sheltered location. All boaters of the harbor know about the sea turtles taking care to protect them. Note- parking is free at the harbor and the walkways are open for strolling to view turtles. Please give boat owners and their guests right-of-way, along with a warm cheerful smile and greeting of Aloha.

Link to Hawaii's Honu'ea on my web page-

<https://georgehbalazs.com/himb-historical/hawaii-and-hawaiins/honuea-hawksbills/>

A few photos of sights you will see at Honokohau Harbor. Including the HHHHHH Team and the Hawaiian monk seal, another species that shares use of the harbor with the hawksbills, green turtles, boats, fishers, and other mariners.





From: George Balazs <itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 2, 2025 3:18 AM
To: George Balazs <itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com>
Subject: A Message of Appreciation and Well Wishes

1 January 2025 Honolulu, Hawai'i

Aloha Dear Oceania-Pacific Islands Mail Group Recipients- I'm writing this message, sincerely meant for each and every one of the 459 of you, **To Wish You The Very Best of Peace, Happiness, Health & Success for 2025.** I consider it an honor and a pleasure- and a need being filled in the sea turtle world of our vast Pacific- to send you messages of interest and importance, as has been done now since 2016. We started with ~30 recipients and have grown steadily ever since. We have always welcomed anyone and everyone. And we have always emphasized, and continue to do so, that if at any time you wish to be taken off the list, we will do so promptly and with cordial appreciation for the time you've spent with us. We feel it's a positive sign that, over the years, only about 10 recipients have ever asked to be removed.

Before this day is over I'm going to send another message- one that has two parts to it. I think you'll find it interesting. The first part of the message is of an archival/historical nature involving honu studies at Punalu'u in the Ka'u District. In other words, a way you can look back at what happened in the past that forever changed for the better where we are now in the present. The second part of the message relates to the future- something you can do if you've always been keen to see honu'ea- the Hawaiian hawksbill- in the wild in the sea- without having to get into the water. Amazing but true, I'm happy to say. So, please see my next message when received and you have time to read.

In closing, here's something I kindly ask you to think about-

"In order to decolonize sea turtle conservation, you have to appreciate and respect indigenous peoples and their traditions as much as you do sea turtles"- G.H. Balazs 30 December 2024 while pondering what 'decolonization' means.

and

Proclaiming 2025 as- "The Year of Decolonizing Sea Turtle Conservation: A Beginning to the End"

Note- This is my proclamation, no one else, but maybe just maybe it will gain traction in the hearts and minds of others.