

2 So You Want to See a Turtle

I've always maintained that the *honu* are their own best ambassadors.

—George H. Balazs

Best place in the world to see sea turtles

If you want to see marine turtles in their natural habitat, Hawai'i is the best place on the planet. That's because for sea turtles, Hawai'i is by far the best place to be! No other turtle population is blessed with such a lucky combination of isolated geography, effective protection, and year-round Spirit of Aloha.

Hawai'i's turtles are 100 percent Hawaiian, living their entire lives within the island chain and surrounding ocean waters. That makes it easier to keep them from harm. Other sea turtles grow up in the waters of one country, then migrate through the waters of other countries to lay eggs in the sands of yet another. Rarely do all of the involved countries effectively protect the turtles.

Here again, Hawai'i's turtles have been most fortunate. State law protected them from commercial harvesting in 1974, four years before the U.S. Endangered Species Act gave them full protection. Unlike in many other parts of the world, Hawai'i and the United States actually enforce protection laws.

Hawai'i's people have not only provided their turtles with safe harbor but have consistently come to the aid of any *honu* in distress. This has produced an animal that goes about its business under the full gaze of residents and vacationers alike. Few creatures can summon the confidence that many *honu* routinely exhibit around humans. With each new turtle encounter, another human is charmed and *honu* can chalk up one more turtle fan.

George Balazs is leader of Marine Turtle Research for the NOAA Pa-

cific Islands Fisheries Science Center, Protected Species Division, located in Hawai'i. He's Hawai'i's acknowledged turtle expert. He points out that *honu* are right up there with Hawai'i's humpback whales in terms of marine life popularity. The turtles are much more common, easier to see close up in safety, and available all year round.

The people of Hawai'i clearly love their turtles. Evidence of this abounds: *honu* shirts, *honu* hats, *honu* stickers, *honu* necklaces, *honu* earrings, *honu* wind chimes, *honu* tattoos — a celebration of *honu* everywhere, and why not? *Honu* are beautiful and graceful — charisma in a shell, and above all, nature's work of art.

Spotting *honu* without getting wet

If you've seen a *honu*, then you know the delight that first contact brings. If you haven't, we hope to prepare you for it and bring that precious moment closer. Plentiful and tolerant turtles combined with Hawai'i's inviting waters mean that *anyone* can experience the thrill of meeting *honu*.

Honu in captivity

On O'ahu, Sea Life Park has provided a sanctuary for nearly two dozen breeding *honu* for many years. These turtles were obtained in 1968, before laws protecting them had even been conceived. An exception in the legislation made it legal to keep the captive *honu*. Since 1976, the turtles have been nesting successfully on Sea Life Park's artificial beach, so if you visit at the right time you'll also get to see *honu* hatchlings.

The Maui Ocean Center maintains a saltwater pool with an underwater viewing area. It features several young *honu* obtained from Sea Life Park. A year old upon arrival, they spend about two years on display before their release into the wild. Meanwhile, they are stars of one of the center's most popular exhibits, making new friends for the *honu* every day.

Little *honu* also charm guests at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel on the Big Island. There, a series of beautiful interconnected pools hold several tiny turtles originally from Sea Life Park. When they are large enough, the hotel releases them during special Fourth of July ceremonies known as Turtle Independence Day, a custom that began in 1989.

Honu in the wild

Of course, even seeing *honu* up close in a beautiful aquarium setting is only second best compared to seeing them swimming and living in their





Photo of Amuala, taken in 1997 before we learned that he was a male. We first met Amuala in 1995, when he was small enough for us to classify him as a juvenile. He was tolerant from the beginning, making him a perfect model for photographs.

natural habitat. In Hawai'i, all you need to see a sea turtle in the wild are some hints, combined with a little patience.

Before we start, however, let's review some responsible viewing guidelines that the National Marine Fisheries Service and the State of Hawai'i recommend. Note that these do *not* replace federal or state law:

- Always keep a safe distance. Please do not chase, closely approach, surround, swim with, or attempt to touch marine wildlife.
- For sea turtles, please remember that feeding, touching, or attempting to ride them can cause distress. Please observe from a distance and allow them an escape route to deeper water.
- Never entice marine wildlife to approach you.
- Be careful not to surprise marine wildlife.

We'll emphasize and expand upon these points throughout the book. Now, back to finding turtles in the wild. The first thing to learn is

Maui Ocean Center is a terrific place to learn about Hawai'i's sea creatures. The undeniably cute young *honu* in their sea turtle tank attract plenty of visitors. As interesting as it was to compare MOC *honu* behavior with what we see in the wild, it was even more fascinating to study how people watched *honu*. Kids were the most creative when it came to observing turtles. For example, they'd flip open a cellphone, aim at a turtle, and *click!*—a friend on the mainland would have an instant picture of a Hawaiian shelled wonder. What's almost as good as watching *honu*? Watching kids watch *honu*.



where to look. The key here is that *honu* are primarily marine vegetarians. They feed on seaweeds—*limu* in Hawaiian—that typically grow close to shore. They especially like the red seaweed known as *Pterocladia capillacea* to scientists and *loloa* to Hawaiians. At low tide, you can see this alga growing on the rocks in many places. Almost anywhere this *limu* grows in abundance is a prime location for spotting turtles.

Next, you need to know when to look. In some areas you can see *honu* feeding at almost any time of the day, but in most places the best times to watch for turtles are late afternoons when the sun rides low and just before dawn when there is barely enough light to see.

Look for turtle heads. Sea turtles breathe air, mainly through their mouths. When they're feeding, they typically come up to breathe every five minutes or so. Keep watching the water around a place where you know *loloa* and other *limu* grow. You are almost certain to see a "popper," our term for a turtle head popping up for a quick breath before ducking back down for more food. *Honu* have become so common that you are often rewarded with a popper just by keeping a watchful eye on almost any stretch of water close to shore.



These photos show the favorite food of the Honokōwai honu, the limu *Pterocladia*. From top to bottom: *Pterocladia* exposed at low tide, submerged at high tide, and being consumed at honu supertime. All of these pictures were taken right at the shoreline.

Some places attract more turtles than others, probably because the food they like grows there. At the right time at such a place, it's common to see two, three, or more *honu* heads up at the same time, often as close as the water's edge.

Don't assume that two or three heads means only two or three *honu* are about. For every head you see break the surface, there are probably three or four turtles under the water, actively feeding.

Sometimes you can find a popular foraging spot in a place you wouldn't expect. For example, every evening starting about an hour before sunset, turtles gather to feed along the shore just north of the Māla Wharf in Lahaina, Maui. On the *mauka* (inland) side, constant traffic flows along Front Street, while the *makai* (sea) side is busy with boats coming and going from the wharf and adjacent anchorage.

None of this bothers *honu*. They are simply interested in the *Pterocladia* that grows in the shallows. Fortunately for turtle watchers, there are a few places to park right by the side of the road. Because of the timing, you can enjoy not only the spectacle of numerous *honu* heads popping up to breathe but also one of West Maui's famous sunsets.

Sunset and dawn aren't the only times to watch for *honu*. You can also spot turtles during the day, but usually only when the sun is behind you. Otherwise, the contrast is too high.

One of Hawai'i's great charms is that since the remarkable recovery of the *honu* in recent years, any stretch of coastline will do. Watch the water carefully. The chances that you'll be rewarded are good, but you will need patience. *Honu* don't breathe as often when they're resting on the bottom.

During the day, many *honu* like to lie about on the reef, typically within a couple of hundred yards from shore. To spot these turtles, start scanning at the shoreline and work out toward deeper water.

You begin at the water's edge because more and more turtles have started to feed during daylight, so there's some chance you'll see a popper close to shore. As you look farther out, start watching for the backs of brownish shells. These are *honu*, up for a breath.

When resting turtles surface to breathe, their technique differs from when they are feeding. Instead of popping up quickly, *honu* float at the surface for a while, usually with head down so that they can watch below. Several times during this interlude, they breathe: The head goes up, there is a whoosh and a gasp as air is taken in — and though the head is raised for only a moment, that's when they are easiest to spot.



Without question, the best time to observe and photograph turtles is on those special days when the air is still, the sun is shining bright, and the ocean is millpond calm. When *honu* go up for air in such splendid conditions, they will linger on the surface, flippers spread for balance, and have a long look around. The similarity in appearance to large soaring birds is most pronounced at times like these.

The throat of a *honu* is creamy white, or nearly so. As the head rises, the glistening wet throat expands to help take in air. It flashes in the brilliant sun, making it readily visible from the shore. This is your tip-off. Once you've spotted a turtle, scan the nearby water for others. Usually, where there's one turtle you'll find more.

You can use binoculars, but remember that doing so limits your field of vision. Until you've located the turtles, scan at least some of the time with the naked eye. That gives your peripheral vision a chance to pick up a throat-flash. You might not spot *honu* immediately, but you will know which way to point your field glasses.

There are lots of places where *honu* congregate close enough to shore that you can catch sight of them. For example, you usually can see turtles



A *honu* we know only as 1999 Turtle 153 with head raised for a breath, providing a perfect example of the way a turtle's white throat reflects light almost as well as a mirror. This makes it possible for you to spot a turtle from shore, even at a distance of a couple hundred yards.

any time of day at the south end of Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park, just north of Kailua-Kona on the Big Island. Enter through the Honokōhau Small Boat Harbor and take the park trail to the right. Almost immediately you'll come upon Honokōhau Beach. Usually, you'll see two or three poppers within moments.

Honu on the beach

While you're at Honokōhau Beach, look carefully up and down the shore. You just might see a turtle lying in the sand. In some parts of Hawai'i, *honu* have become so unafraid of humans that they are changing their behavior. One of these changes is where and how often they bask on the beach or rocks.

Honu have long been known to crawl up onto shore to bask in the remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. This chain of islets and shoals extends northwest to Midway and Kure Atolls, hundreds of miles from Honolulu. The U.S. government officially protected the area in 1909, and access has long been strictly controlled. In 2006, the chain was declared a national monument and renamed the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, extending even greater protection.



After flipping sand back over the shell to help keep cool, a *honu* dozes off at Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park on the Big Island, unconcerned about the humans also using the beach. From a distance, it would be easy to overlook this turtle.

Because these islands are almost completely uninhabited, the turtles did not have to fear human presence. Now, it seems *honu* have realized that it is safe to come ashore even where humans abound. There are increasing reports from around the main Hawaiian Islands that turtles are sunbathing without concern. There could be a place like that near you.

Even busy O'ahu has such a site on its famous North Shore: Laniākea, or as George Balazs likes to call it, "HonuLani, Home of the Heavenly Turtles." Since it has now become more widely known, however, you are more likely to hear it called by the inevitable nickname of "Turtle Beach."

Located between Hale'iwa Beach County Park and Waimea Bay along the Kamehameha Highway, Laniākea is a magical place where turtles and

humans interact daily. *Honu* are making human friends while providing a thrill that cannot be matched anywhere else in the world. If recent trends continue, the turtles at other basking spots will become more tolerant, providing increased opportunities for people to get to know these charming creatures.

If you are lucky enough to learn of a turtle-basking beach, remember that *honu* are still wild animals, protected under both Hawai'i State and U.S. federal law. You must respect the turtles at all times. Please show them your aloha. Any action that prompts a *honu* to retreat into the water, such as touching, could be considered illegal. More important, though, is to see it from the turtle's point of view: You've ruined a nice sunbath. How rude!

In some places, like Honokōhau and Laniākea, the turtles feed right at the waterline even when there are people in the water next to them. They've completely lost their fear of humans. Again, under these circumstances you must not forget to show your respect for the *honu*.

Remember, the turtles are big, their shells are hard, they are in their natural element while you're not, and they aren't looking out for people. *Honu* have large and powerful flippers, so when a turtle is trying to move around in the shorebreak to nibble a tasty morsel, you don't want to get in the way. The most likely accident, however, would be an untimely wave that tosses the turtle right at you. If you are struck by the edge of the turtle's shell, the *honu* won't mind — but you definitely will.

You and the *honu* will be safe and happy as long as you use common sense and remember Rule No. 1: Respect *honu* — show them aloha.

Snorkeling with *honu*

Seeing a *honu* basking or feeding right at the shoreline in broad daylight is certainly a wonderful experience. There's no doubt, however, that the best place to see turtles is in their deeper natural environment: under the water, where they live almost all of their lives. There you can see for yourself the grace and beauty of *honu* in motion — and you must. Any description we put on paper would be inadequate.

Snorkeling is the simplest way to have such an experience. The equipment is cheap to rent and almost anyone can use it. If you don't know how to snorkel, seeing a *honu* is the best reason there is to learn.

You'll need to know where to snorkel. Most large turtles tend to stay farther from shore and in water too deep or dangerous for most snorkel-



Most people are satisfied to watch the baskers on the sand right at Laniākea, but if you stroll to the left along the shoreline for a few minutes, you are likely to see *honu* feeding right in the surf at the water's edge. These turtles are so determined to get at the *limu* growing in the nooks and crannies of the rocks that they are oblivious to the waves that break on top of them and toss them around.

ers, but fortunately there are exceptions. At some locations, you can find large *honu* within easy snorkeling range.

For example, on O'ahu you can snorkel over the reef and see big *honu* right in front of the Sheraton Hotel off Waikīkī Beach, and snorkelers commonly see turtles at Hanauma Bay. On Maui, you can usually find several large *honu* around Black Rock, a well-known snorkeling location in Kā'anapali. These are three of the busiest beaches in Hawai'i.

Ask for the local *honu* spot at the place where you rent your equipment or at the local dive shop. There's sure to be at least one. While it might be overcrowded, you can be certain of one thing: Because so many people



Pi'i (Hawaiian for "to mount" — don't ask) hangs at the surface between breaths. An unidentified male *honu* makes the trip to the surface in the background. This turtle encounter required a kayak, since these *honu* are too far out for safe snorkeling from shore.

know about these places, the *honu* you'll find there are extremely tolerant. If they weren't, they wouldn't stay there.

Without a doubt, the unqualified best place to snorkel with *honu* is Laniākea. One caution: Make sure conditions are safe for snorkeling. The waves here can get big and dangerous, especially in winter. Remember, the North Shore of O'ahu — and, in fact, much of the coastline of the Hawaiian Islands — has a reputation for high surf.

If conditions are safe, leave the turtles in the shallow water to the waders. Head for the rocks on either side of the beach, where the *limu* that *honu* like is growing. In no time, you'll see nibbling turtles. Just keep your distance and watch to your heart's content. It can't get easier.

Fortunately for inexperienced snorkelers, the youngest (and cutest) *honu* prefer the shallows. Small turtles like to tuck safely under coral ledges and into holes in the reef. Their shells are fourteen to sixteen inches in length — about large pizza size, although the natural magnification of water makes them seem about one-third bigger. They resemble exquisite gems: burnished brown, highlighted with glistening golds and greens. They also blend in remarkably well with the surrounding corals, so you need a sharp eye.



When we first met in 1999, the adorable young *honu* swimming here was one of the smallest turtles we'd ever seen. Akebono, named after the famous sumo wrestler from Hawai'i, returns from getting air and heads back under a ledge, which already shelters another juvenile. You did see the second *honu*, right? They do blend in well.

Once you spot a young turtle, don't dive down to get a better look. Disturbing *honu* is never a good idea, not to mention that it's also illegal. Instead, use patience. Hang around quietly and wait. Eventually, the turtle will want to breathe or will get restless and move. If you haven't upset the little *honu* — something you definitely don't want to do — you might get lucky. An unconcerned turtle will often surface to breathe near enough for a snorkeler to get an excellent look.

A departing turtle usually does so slowly enough for you to tag along at a polite distance. You must not chase the turtle or give the appearance of doing so, because that would be rude and illegal. Besides, if you follow too closely or dive to get nearer, you guarantee that the turtle will just keep swimming. Trust us, *honu* can swim a lot farther and faster than you can. On the other hand, if you show respect for the turtle, you might even get an opportunity to see some foraging. Little turtles sometimes peck at random patches of seaweed as they swim along.

Kayaking with *honu*

Kayaking has become popular in Hawai'i, providing another terrific way to experience *honu*. Almost every guided kayak tour includes an opportunity to see turtles.

Some feature a "Turtle Town" as a stop. This usually means that you'll really be snorkeling to look for *honu*. The kayak is simply the means to get there.

Others take you through areas where your guide knows that you can often see turtles surfacing. While this sort of sighting is definitely interesting, it's also usually brief since you're just passing through.

Another rewarding way to watch *honu* from a kayak is to paddle to an area right above a place where the turtles like to rest. At any given time over such a reef, you are likely to see at least one or two *honu* floating on the surface, occasionally with head raised to take a breath.

The first thing to keep in mind is precisely this point: The turtles need to breathe, and that's why they're on the surface. While you want to get close enough for a good look or perhaps a terrific picture, you also want to stay back far enough to make sure the *honu* are getting a chance to fill their lungs. The obvious conclusion is that you don't paddle in a mad rush straight toward the turtle.

Some turtles are nervous. As soon as they catch sight of your kayak, they'll dive. Others won't dive unless you start to approach. Some turtles



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Our kayak allows us to extend the range of turtle observations well beyond the limits that our air supply imposes underwater. We can take the kayak to a resting site that is out of diving range, then don snorkel gear and jump in the water. The *honu* often surface to breathe within camera range, but timing both the raised head and the rise and fall of the waves still makes it tricky to get good pictures.

seem not to care about the kayak at all and will stay on the surface even right next to your boat. Unfortunately, there is no way for you to know in advance which *honu* are the tolerant ones. You therefore need a strategy that gives you the best chance of a close encounter without upsetting any turtles.

First, plan out the area in which you'll do your observing. As always, pay close attention to the current and wind conditions, because they play an important part in your strategy and personal safety. You'll be paddling upcurrent (or upwind) past your observation zone, then drifting back through the area toward the floating *honu*. This lets you keep paddling to a minimum, so there is the least disturbance in the water and therefore little to startle the turtle. Use your paddle only to steer carefully so that you drift past the *honu*, not directly at them. The principle to keep in mind is, "If in doubt, be cautious."

A turtle often stays on the surface a surprisingly long time (especially



When the winds are down and the water is still, we don't have to get in the water to get pictures. The turtles enjoy the calm as much as we do, and so they stay longer at the surface, perhaps soaking up some of that warm Hawaiian sun. This gives us a much better chance to get a profile shot that we can use to identify the *honu*.

if the water is calm), so there is no need to hurry. Furthermore, if you are in the right place, you don't need to dash over to every shell you see. Have some patience, enjoy the ocean, and wait. There'll be another turtle popping up shortly.

Diving with *honu*

Unquestionably, the best way to see *honu* is to use scuba. In Hawai'i, anyone who dives can be certain of seeing a turtle. Because the turtle population has grown so much, the number of places to see turtles increases steadily every year.

Most likely you will be on an escorted dive when you see *honu*. This makes finding the turtles easy. The hard part is making sure that your visit to the *honu* doesn't bother them.

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Here is a classic example of a *honu* in alert position. The turtle has risen up from the coral, its neck extended to get a better look, and flippers deployed in preparation for a departure if necessary. (Note that this *honu* is not exercising proper reef etiquette and is “stepping” on the coral.)

In “I’m curious,” the *honu* ascends casually to the surface. There, the turtle sips a few breaths of fresh air while studying events below. Pick a spot in sight of the place where the *honu* was resting, settle to the bottom, and wait patiently. Chances are good that the turtle will decide you’re harmless and that it’s okay to come back. The return path might even include a swoop right over your head, providing a spectacular photo or video opportunity.

If the *honu* are enjoying (or at least tolerating) your company, they stay planted on the bottom, content to watch you watching them. It’s really about trust. If you do things right, *honu* trust you so much they’ll even turn their backs to you, or go about doing whatever they were doing as if you weren’t there.



You'll know you've really got it right if they close their eyes and drift off to sleep in your presence. That's the greatest *honu* compliment of all.

"Sleep?" we hear you ask. Yes, sleep: Many *honu* are primarily nocturnal feeders, so for the ones lying about the reef during the day, you're in their bedroom. Think about that for a minute.

How would you feel if you were just settling down for a comfy sleep and half a dozen or so clumsy, unruly strangers crowded into your room, perhaps even coming up and sitting on the bed next to you? We'll bet you wouldn't be happy.

The remarkable thing about *honu* is that they often *don't* flee at the first sign of divers. This is what makes Hawaiian turtles unique. Almost anywhere else in the world, fright and flight are the turtle's natural responses. Many *honu*, however, have grown to trust humans. There's a good reason for this: we haven't hunted or hurt them since the mid-1970s. It's your duty not to break that trust and to reinforce their confidence by leaving them undisturbed.

Finding *honu* underwater

You and a buddy might also go diving on your own to watch *honu*. Perhaps you already know where to find the turtles, or maybe you're looking for them. If you aren't diving at one of the well-known Turtle Towns, the turtles you encounter are less likely to be used to divers, so probably it will be harder to get close. On the other hand, there will be fewer divers trying to get a look at the turtles, therefore less chance that someone might disturb them — and as always, your goal is untroubled and happy *honu*.

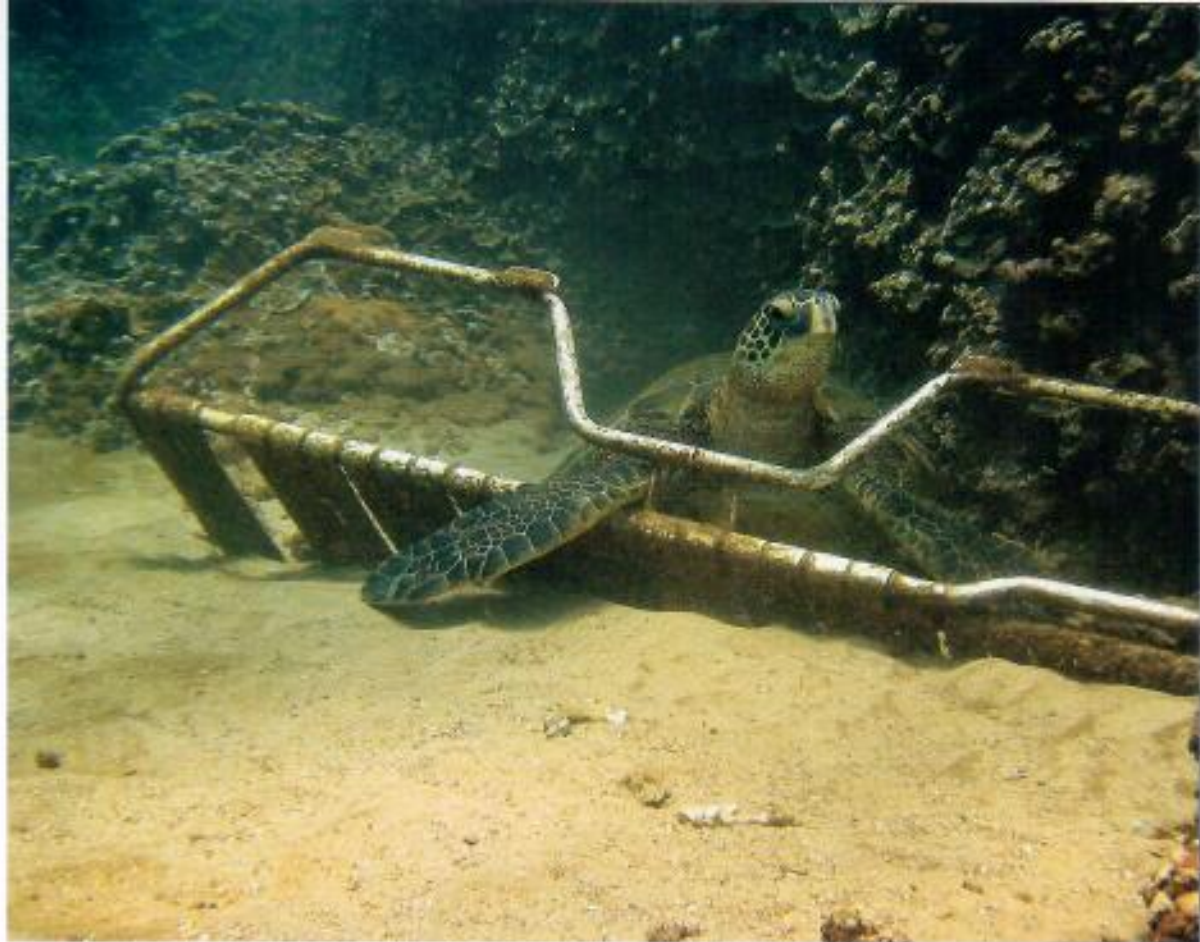
There are a number of things that increase the chances of discovering *honu*. If you've scanned the ocean from shore, you might already have spotted a place where turtles are frequently on the surface for air. If you haven't, once underwater head for a reef, the preferred *honu* haunt. You can often see turtles in other places, but a reef in about thirty to fifty feet of water and one to two hundred yards offshore offers the best odds.

Look for prominent, visually interesting features, such as coral outcroppings, pinnacles, or vertical relief. If *honu* are resting in the area, these are the best places to find them.

Incidentally, this is true away from the reef also. Conspicuous rocks or coral heads or even sunken man-made objects often attract turtles. The



In Hawaiian, *moe* means “to sleep, to lie down,” and that’s what this turtle does. Moe has slept through every summer since we met him in 1999. We have rarely seen him with open eyelids, and that is no exaggeration! He’s slept in almost every position you can imagine, including on his chin. Does this look uncomfortable? Perhaps for you, but obviously not for him.



Big winter waves swept this chair off the beach and a couple of hundred yards from shore, where it was still used for lounging around—but by the *honu*. On nearly every dive we made at this site, the same young turtle was resting in the chair. Underwater man-made objects often become resting habitat for *honu*.

“attractor” doesn’t have to be huge, but it will probably be at least as big as the *honu*—maybe a yard long and no less than a couple of feet high.

Although you might find up to half a dozen *honu* around such an object, most of the turtles will be resting on the reef. There you might come across another clue to the presence of turtles: *Turtle Tramples*.

Honu like to settle down into holes on the reef, which they’ve often made themselves. We call these Turtle Tramples because that’s what *honu* do: They trample the coral. A reef with patches of crushed coral is therefore a strong indicator that *honu* have been hanging around. Remember, the reef is the turtle’s bedroom, and just like humans, *honu* typically prefer to sleep in the same bed every night—or in this case, day. It doesn’t take many sleeps to create a coral crater.

Ledges, caves, and cracks also appeal to *honu*. They like these for the



Hoa, seen at Honokōwai annually since 1997, is a favorite because his calm manner reassures other *honu* that we aren't a threat. If you look right into his eyes, he gazes straight back.

protection they offer. If you find an area with all of the above, you're almost sure to be in the middle of *honu* habitat. You are likely to see turtles.

Once you've found some *honu*, you can start observing their behavior. There's so much to watch for that we gave the topic its own chapter: "The Things *Honu* Do." For now, we'll just leave you with some thoughts about *honu* personalities.

The nature of *honu*

We've learned that *honu* can be almost as varied in temperament as people are. Playful curiosity seems to drive most youngsters, while adults prefer peace and quiet. Females generally are more reserved and cautious than males. Immature males often begin to feel their oats and will pester larger turtles. If there is any physical scuffling, usually one of the combat-



Nani, whose House, frame name *ta'ape*.

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Nani, whose name is Hawaiian for "beautiful, splendid," rests in her favorite place at the Turtle House, framed by a rainbow of bluestriped snappers, known in Hawai'i by their Polynesian name *ta'ape*.

ants is a male. We've concluded that deep inside, however, even the most blustery Hawaiian turtle is really meek at heart.

Yet within these generalizations there are exceptions: young turtles quiet and withdrawn, adults boisterous and inherently obnoxious, and young males with the refined demeanor of an English butler. It's all part of the fascination of observing *honu*.

The eyes are the windows of the soul, it's said. Look into a *honu's* eyes some time. If you've been careful and kind—gained the *honu's* confidence—those eyes will look placidly back at you.

There is no better experience—no happier time—for us than resting with old friends on the ocean bottom.

Heaven, they say, is Up There, with white clouds and halos and angels,

but Heaven for us happens underwater, when the late afternoon ocean shimmers electric blue and sunshine ripples gold on the backs of our *honu* friends.

Heaven is being surrounded by sea turtles and, if not being accepted as one of them, at least being accepted. Heaven is where *honu* are.