

10 Of *Honu* and Foxes

You become responsible, forever,
for what you have tamed.

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry,
The Little Prince

A perfect allegory

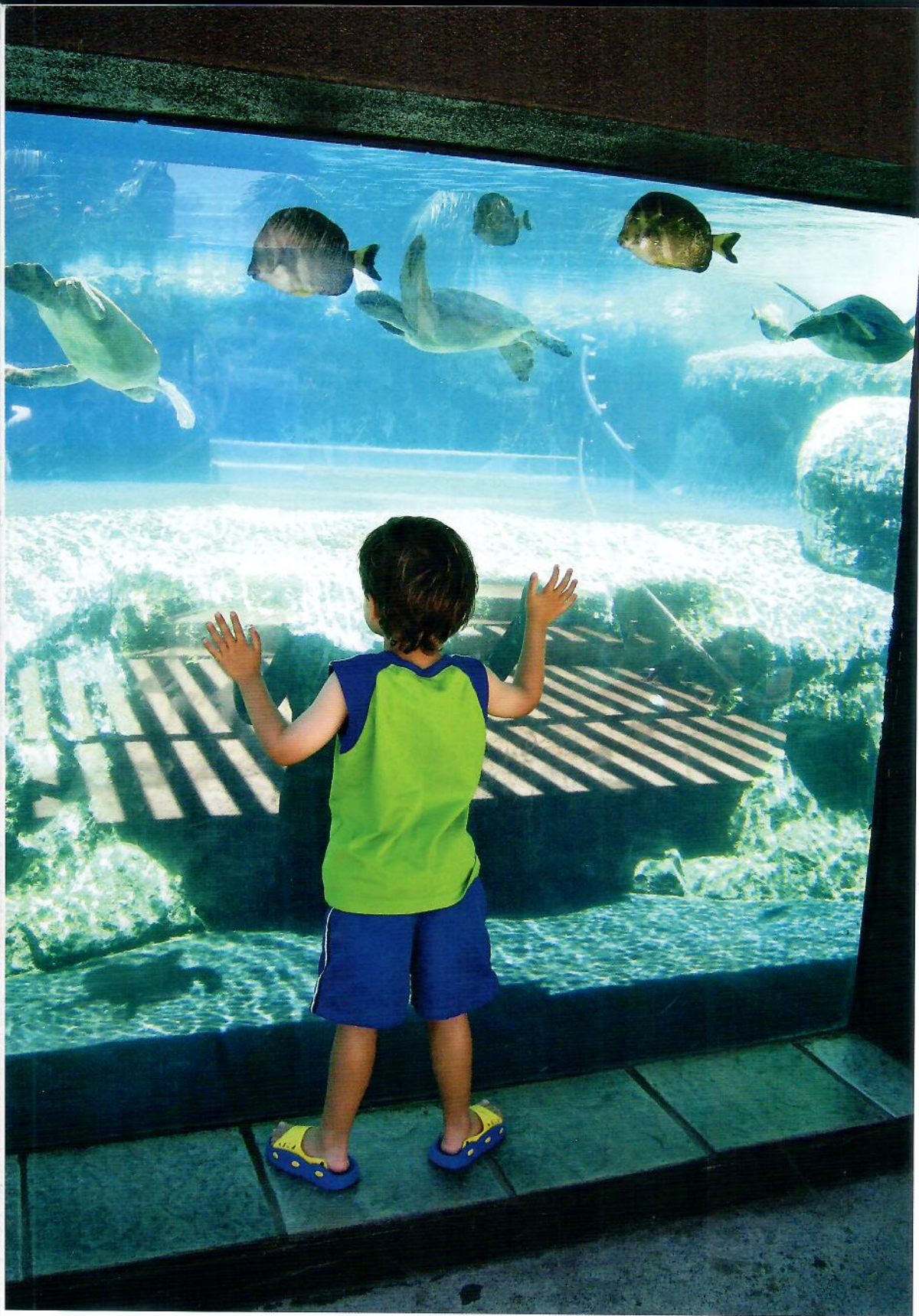
The classic story *The Little Prince* contains a beautiful metaphor for the relationship between humans and nature. In the story, the Little Prince encounters a fox. Feeling unhappy, he asks the fox to play with him. The fox replies that he cannot, for he is not tamed. The Little Prince is unfamiliar with the concept of taming, so he asks the fox to explain.

The fox teaches the Little Prince that taming means establishing ties that, once created, make the bond unique. He points out that the Little Prince is just a boy, like a hundred thousand other boys, and that he is a fox, just like a hundred thousand other foxes. Then he explains that taming would mean that they need each other.

So the fox teaches the Little Prince how to tame him. They gradually get to know one another from a distance of safety—their own comfort zones. Over time, the two hearts draw a little closer every day. Ever so patiently they forge a bond of trust. Taming is time intensive and demands patience. There are no shortcuts.

We hope that you understand what this concept of “taming” has to do with *honu*. There could be a hundred thousand sea turtles in the Pacific that are just like a hundred thousand other sea turtles in the world, but the ones we dive with have tamed us, and we them. They have names like Clothahump, Zeus, Tiamat, and Akebono. Some, like Tutu and Nui, we’ve known since the early 1990s.

To us, the turtles at our dive site are “unique in all the world.” This uniqueness is enormously rewarding. These *honu* matter a great deal to us. We have need of them.





Taming indeed has its emotional rewards, at least for us humans. Yet taming is truly an awe-inspiring thing, if for no other reason than taming teaches a wild creature to trust humans. Taming essentially removes some of the “wild” out of wildlife.

Every single day in Hawai‘i, humans are taming *honu*. By not harassing, hurting, or hunting them, residents and visitors alike teach the *honu* that they have nothing to fear from close human contact. As we said before, *honu* learn from experience. Tour boat operators, divemasters, kayakers, surfers, even tourists have taught *honu* that humans are *safe*! That’s quite a lesson to serve up to any wild creature.

Intentionally or not, Hawai‘i has tamed her *honu*. It’s really that simple. The challenge now is to make people aware of the enormous responsibility that comes with that taming — and to live up to it.

We leave the last words to a wise fox. When the time comes for the Little Prince to leave, the fox cries as he shares his simple secret with his new friend. As we have learned from our own experiences underwater with *honu*, taming comes with an exacting price.

“Men have forgotten this truth,” said the fox. “But you must not forget it. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.”



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HAWAII NATURAL HISTORY

\$18.95

This is the first guide to finding and observing Hawaiian green turtles, or *honu*. It describes an exciting journey of discovery undertaken by two avid sports divers, Peter Bennett and Ursula Keuper-Bennett, who encountered their first *honu* twenty years ago while diving off Honokōwai, Maui. The Bennetts soon realized that many *honu* (and green turtles worldwide) were afflicted with debilitating and potentially deadly tumors. They began to document the disease using photographs and videotape and in the process educated themselves about the daily lives of *honu*. To their surprise, they discovered they were the first to make prolonged observations of a marine turtle population in its natural habitat.

Drawing on their extensive experience, the Bennetts explain how to find and watch *honu* from shore and while snorkeling, kayaking, and especially diving. They describe the behaviors they have documented over the years and what they might mean. Their rich collection of photographs will introduce readers to *honu* not only as a species, but also as individual animals whose histories they have closely followed and recorded. This special group of *honu* includes Clothahump, the one who started it all; Tutu, who has made the 500-mile migration to her nesting grounds at least six times and shown amazing fidelity by returning to the same spot on the reef after each migration; 5690, who vanished for twenty years until she decided to make her nest on the busiest beach in Lahaina, Maui; Nui, a youngster suffering from tumors who went on to beat the disease and mature into a handsome adult male; and George, the survivor of a particularly vicious shark attack.

Thanks to a highly successful conservation and research program and protection granted by the U.S. Endangered Species Act, encounters between sea turtles and humans in Hawai'i have become common. Accessibly written and extensively illustrated, *The Book of Honu* will alert turtle enthusiasts and others on what to expect when they come across these gentle creatures and how to observe them respectfully.

Since 1988 Peter Bennett and Ursula Keuper-Bennett have journeyed every summer from their home in Ontario to West Maui to dive with and learn from *honu*. They pioneered the use of underwater photography and videotaping in the study of *honu* and in 1995 developed Turtle Trax, the first web site devoted to sea turtles.

THE BOOK OF

HONU



Enjoying and Learning
about Hawai'i's Sea Turtles

PETER BENNETT AND URSULA KEUPER-BENNETT