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Theater, from Page 10

*Hemolele in 2023.**U'i 'Ea Kamano in 2024.*

between their eyes where a green turtle has two. Honu'ea have two claws on each of their front flippers while a green turtle has one on each flipper. Their shell or carapace is formed in layers called scutes, like shingles, and the edges of the shell are serrated, not smooth.

A fourth hawksbill that I saw and named was U'i 'Ea Kamano, #HI-094; the name means beautiful hawksbill of Kamano (Nishimura Bay). I saw this gorgeous subadult creature in February, 2024.

The shells of these turtles have been prized over the centuries, and tortoiseshell jewelry and art have been found in the graves of predynastic rulers of Egypt from 3,000 BC. The hawksbill's shell was considered a luxury material next to jade, bronze and silk during China's Han Dynasty, 206 BCE to 220 CE. The Mayan and Aztec civilizations also prized the tortoiseshell for its rarity and beauty, and used them to adorn the nobility and elite members of society.

Hawaii is the endangered species capital of the world. We have more endangered species existing here than anywhere else on earth. Besides our sea turtles, here are a few others on the list: monk seals, nēnē, pueo, Hawaiian hoary bat, more than 100 plants, insects like the Hawaiian bee, and many of our fish. The hawksbill turtle has been protected since the 1970s under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), so

any tortoiseshell product cannot be legally bought, sold, transported, or traded in Hawaii or anywhere else in the U.S. This is enforced through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Hawaii has some of the strongest conservation awareness programs. These include NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. If you want to report turtle sightings or get involved in the conservation efforts, reach out to them. The hawksbills are protected under

See Honu'ea, on Page 12

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Mariah Saxon in 2026.

Hawaii State Law. There’s much information on the hihawksbills.org site, including viewing the photos of the turtles in the database.

A few weeks ago, I happened to see a young turtle at Mahukona that caught my eye, so I watched and took photos. I was sure it was a hawksbill. It was. I named this fifth honu’ea Mahukona Mariah Saxon, #HI-116. It was a juvenile, just as

sweet and delightful as my granddaughter, so it carries her name.

With so few hawksbill turtles in Hawaiian waters, it’s a gift to be in their presence. They need our protection and intervention if they are to survive. I hope that the five honu’ea I’ve been privileged to have encountered all live in peace to a ripe old age.



Photo by Donna Maltz

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