

Date: Mon, 11 Apr 2016 08:50:48 +0000
From: itsahonuworldinhawaii@HOTMAIL.COM
Subject: [CTURTLE] Guest Editorial & Final USA Rule on the Hawaiian Green Turtle
To: CTURTLE@LISTS.UFL.EDU

Submitted to Cturtle Sunday 10 April 2016 2250h:

Dear Cturtlers- For an informative update on contrasting viewpoints, please click and read the link below, then take a few minutes to read the Editorial (pasted below) from a recent issue of Marine Turtle Newsletter. I fully concur with the Bennetts' puzzlement about conservation decision-making policies under the USA Endangered Species Act (ESA). To quote the Bennetts "something is drastically wrong with the ESA system." At least in this case I fully concur and share their bewilderment. However, the Bennett's perspective, and my perspective, have a major difference worth noting,- the Bennetts have 25 years of observing and documenting Hawaii's green turtles to base their conclusions. I have 50 years. Noting further that the 25 years I have known the Bennetts and the rigor of their observations have been among the very best of the 50.

As you might imagine, these are not easy things to be saying publicly and globally about this decision making. But they do need to be spoken in the interests of honesty of viewpoint, history, and for the benefit of marine turtle scientists, managers, and conservationists of the future.

Sincerely, George H. Balazs, Member (since 1976) Oceania Region, IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/2016/04_April/05_04_greenturtlefinalrule.html

Marine Turtle Newsletter

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Guest Editorial: Comments on the Identification and Proposed Listing of Eleven Distinct Population Segments of Green Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*)

Peter Bennett & Ursula Keuper-Bennett

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In early 2015, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), which are the two federal agencies responsible for sea turtle protection and management in the US, proposed changing the way that green sea turtles are listed in the US Endangered Species Act. Part of the proposal includes listing the Central North Pacific population segment, which includes Hawaiian green turtles, as Threatened. We have spent 25 years observing and documenting the Hawaiian green turtle, (honu) population of Honokowai, West Maui. Over that span, we spent more than 100 24-hour days underwater with the honu, accumulating over 750 hours of video and 8-10,000 pictures. In 1995, we published the first ever marine turtle website at <<http://www.turtles.org>>, and for almost 15 years it remained the top search result for "turtle." We developed a system for identifying individuals and used it to compile a database for over 750 turtles. At the 19th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation, held on South Padre Island, Texas, in March 1999, we presented a summary of our work, showing that many honu spontaneously recovered from the disease (Bennett *et al.* 2000). In 2008, the University of Hawaii Press published our book about the Hawaiian green turtle and our experiences with them (Bennett & Keuper-Bennett 2008). In it, on page 125 we expressed our feelings about de-listing the honu:

"Our affection for the honu means that of course we don't want to see them hunted. If, however, their numbers have recovered to the point where a regulated harvest would not threaten the overall population, then we find it hard to oppose. Our objections would be strictly emotional, not scientific. We'd insist that such a hunt

