

SOME OF MY Best Shots



After hiking a few miles of the Pupukea Trail and a round of Golf at Turtle Bay, I was on my way home to Waikiki when my girlfriend convinced me to swing by Puaena Point Beach Park just north of Haleiwa Town on the North Shore of Oahu. To our surprise, we saw two green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) feeding on the green algae growing on the rocks on the beach. The tide was high allowing both turtles to feed comfortably while remaining submerged in about two to three feet of ocean water, coming up to breath every few minutes or so. Occasionally, the surf was large enough to push them onto the rocks. After about 45 minutes or so, the turtles finished their dinner and made their way out to deeper water.

Green sea turtles, in spite of their population numbers around the Hawaiian Islands, remain listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. All four species of sea turtles, known in Hawaiian as "honu," remain in a state of some fragility. Ships' logs from the 18th century cruises of Pacific exploration tell of sailors being sent ashore by their captains to collect turtles to replenish the depleted fresh meat stocks. The turtles could be put on their backs in the ship's hold and kept alive for an extended time. Today, on some remote

Pacific islands, sea turtles are consumed. Under United States' law, they are protected from harm. In addition to threats of being consumed by humans, sea turtles are threatened by entanglement with fishing gear and marine debris, habitat disturbances, and shark attacks.

When proposing any activity that occurs in areas known to be occupied by sea turtles, the Navy considers the potential for impact on this important member of our marine and nearshore ecosystem and modifies the proposal to avoid them.

These pictures were taken with a Canon EOS 5D Mark II body equipped with a Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8 L USM Lens and a B+W 72mm Circular Polarizer Filter.

Lieutenant Erik Molina ● Navy Region Hawaii/Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific ● erik.molina@navy.mil

Submit your own Best Shot to Bruce McCaffrey, *Currents'* managing editor, at brucemccaffrey@sbcglobal.net.

