

Marine Turtle Newsletter

SEA TURTLE TAG CENTER OF THE PACIFIC

The Sea Turtle Tag Center of the Pacific is a cooperative program to make available tags, tag applicators, and technical assistance in the tagging of sea turtles for research purposes to government and other qualified organizations in the Pacific islands region of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. The program is jointly conducted by the Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the University of Hawaii's Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB). The program is designed in particular to aid those locations where small to moderate numbers of tags (i.e., 100-500) are needed, and local authorities or organizations might not otherwise order them from the manufacturer.

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The tags available for use are made of Inconel, a superior corrosion-resistant alloy composed of cadmium and nickel. The tags are self-piercing, self-locking, and simple to use when applied with a special plier-like applicator to the trailing edge of a turtle's front flippers. All tags are imprinted consecutively with a letter-number combination to identify individual turtles. In addition, the following inscription appears on each tag:

Write HIMB
University
Hawaii 96744

Persons who report the sighting of a tagged turtle to this address are sent a T-shirt bearing a sea turtle logo. The sighting information that is received is relayed in a timely manner to the research organization responsible for tagging the turtle. The distribution of tags in the Pacific region under this cooperative program has been underway for several years, but without the benefit of a formal name until now. Organizations interested in receiving more information about the availability of tags from the Sea Turtle Tag Center of the Pacific should write to George Balazs at the address below.

GEORGE H. BALAZS, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory, 2570 Dole Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396 USA [FAX: (808) 942-2062].

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