

## Protecting Sea Turtles from Man-Made Mistakes

Reported by: Kirk Matthews

Email: [kmatthews@khon2.com](mailto:kmatthews@khon2.com)

Last Update: 4/08 10:38 am

In recent years, marine biologists have been spending more time studying the sea turtle's habits.

Sea turtles raised at Sea Life Park are, from time to time, released back into the ocean and tracked to see where they travel, live, and mate.

They may be attacked by sharks, but their primary enemy lives on land.

"A lot of their life history makes them particularly susceptible to different things that we in Hawaii as people like to do. For example, fishing," Marine Biologist, Regina Woodrum Rudrud said.



Woodrum Rudrud is a lecturer at UH Manoa and works with the NOAA fisheries program.

She says there are a few simple things we can do to ensure the continued existence of sea turtles.

"One of the biggest things is, if you see sea turtles in the water, just choose that as a place not to fish. Other than that, common sense. If you were to throw something on the ground on land you would pick it up. If your hook gets caught in the water, get some snorkel gear, get down there, get it out," said Rudrud.

Turtles face other man-made dangers - deep sea nets that have been lost or discarded; plastic from many sources; and toxic run-off from shore.

Scientists have no real idea of the sea turtle life-span.

Their cousins on land can live 100 years or more.

"And people have been able to see them from birth until death. And no one's been really able to do that with the sea turtles. The estimates are around seventy-five years. Some people claim it's much higher than that and some people claim that it's much lower, around fifty," she said.

We wondered about crowds that gather on North Shore beaches when the sea turtles come onto the sand.

She says, it's not necessarily a bad thing.

"Education about turtles and getting people to love turtles or anything that gets them to love the marine environment is always a good thing. It just depends upon the people's conduct when they're doing it," said Rudrud.

Woodrum Rudrud will be giving a free talk Wednesday night at 6:30 at the UH Art auditorium.