Hawaiian Honu Diver Distinctive Specialty
Student Handbook

Course Standards

Student Prerequisites: PADI Open Water Diver or PADI Junior Open Water Diver or qualifying prerequisite
Minimum Age: 10 years
Depth
Maximum Depth 100 feet: 30-60 feet recommended
Maximum Depth 40ft (10-11 year old) 20-40 feet recommended
Hours: 6 hours recommended
Minimum Open Water Dives: 2 open water dives

Materials and Equipment:

- Hawaiian Honu Diver Course Student handbook
- Student equipment as outlined in the PADI Instructor Manual, General Standards and Procedures
- Log Book

Knowledge Development

Course goals
a. Introduction of the Hawaiian Honu – including their biology and behavior
b. Learn information on Hawaiian Honu green sea turtle threats and worldwide conservation status
c. Learn how to identify individual Hawaiian Honu through their distinct markings
d. Learn to passively interact with Hawaiian Honu.

Knowledge Development Teaching Outline
Topic One: Hawaiian Honu and their Description

Learning Objectives:
By the end of knowledge development, student divers will be able to explain:
Hawaiian Honu history, biology and behavior
What is the local cultural significance of the Hawaiian Honu?

Historically, green turtles have played a large role in Polynesian and Micronesian cultures. In addition to being used as a food source, native peoples all over the Pacific utilized all parts of the turtle making tools and jewelry out of the bones, and containers and utensils out of the carapace. Turtle fat was sometimes used for medicinal purposes to treat burns and other skin disorders. Turtles were often considered the property of the tribal chief and their utilization was regulated by some form of island council.

In the Hawaiian Islands, there were families that considered the green turtle a personal family deity or aumakua, not to be eaten or harmed. One legendary example is the story from the Big Island of Hawaii of the turtle named Kauila. She was believed to be able to change at will into human form to watch over the village children playing near the shore. Artistic elements of green turtles have also been featured prominently in some cultures of the region, such as petroglyphs and tattoo designs.

Caption: Petroglyph of Hawaiian Honu
The Legend of Kauila

Hawaiian legend, as reported by historian Mary Kawena Pukui, tells the story of a mystical sea turtle named Kauila, born on the black sandy shores of Punalu‘u, in the district of Ka‘u on the Big Island of Hawaii. Kauila was born the daughter of two supernatural sea turtles, the mother named Honupo‘okea and the father named Honu. Honupo‘okea gave birth to a very special egg, the color and shape similar to a piece of kauila wood. She buried her special egg in the sand to be warmed by the Hawaiian sun until ready to hatch. Before returning to the sea, Honupo‘okea and Honu used their flippers forming a fresh water pond near their precious nest.

After a time, Honupo‘okea returned to the black sandy beach to wait for her special egg to hatch. Soon the egg cracked open and a beautiful baby turtle emerged - dark and glossy, like kauila wood. Mother and daughter made their way to the fresh water pond to live until Kauila was old enough to be on her own.

Kauila made Punalu‘u her home and would often rest at the bottom of the fresh water pond. The air bubbles from her breath would rise to the top of the pond delighting the children of Ka‘u. Kauila loved all children and would sometime change herself into a little girl so that she could play with and watch over the children on the black sandy shores. The people of Ka‘u cherish Kauila for her fresh water pond that gave them drinking water and for ensuring the safety of their children.

As a species found worldwide, the green turtle is called differently in some languages and dialects. In the Hawaiian language, Honu is used to refer to this species. Honu is the Hawaiian word for “bask”, presumably from named after the basking behavior of the Green Sea Turtle.

• What is the Hawaiian Honu’s biology?

The scientific name for green sea turtle is ____________________________________________

Classification:
  a. Kingdom:
  b. Phylum:
  c. Order:
  d. Family: _________________________________________________________________

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• What is the Hawaiian Honu’s behavior?

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• What Hawaiian Honu’s eat?

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Topic Two: Threats, monitoring activities and status

Learning Objectives:
By the end of knowledge development, student divers will be able to explain:
Hawaiian Honu green sea turtle threats and worldwide conservation status

  • What are the Hawaiian Honu’s threats?

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  • What is Fibropapillomatosis?

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  • What is the worldwide conservation status for the Hawaiian Honu?

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Topic Three: Identification

Learning Objectives:
By the end of knowledge development, student divers will be able to explain:
Hawaiian Honu green sea turtle identification through their distinct markings
• What species of sea turtles occur in Hawaii?

• How do you identify the Hawaiian Honu?

Topic Four: Proper interaction

Learning Objectives:
By the end of knowledge development, student divers will be able to explain:
How to passively interact with Hawaiian Honu

• How to interact with the Hawaiian Honu underwater?

• What is the best way to get a photograph of the Hawaiian Honu?
• How to incorporate you into a photograph with the Hawaiian Honu?

Open Water Dives

Open Water Training Dive One

Performance Requirements
By the end of this training session you will be able to:
• Demonstrate a controlled entry and descent
• Demonstrate neutral buoyancy by hovering
• Identify any Hawaiian Honu (Green Sea Turtle) distinctive features or markings
• Estimate the size and dimensions of any turtles encountered
• Observe Hawaiian Honu (Green Sea Turtle) behavior
• Properly photograph a Hawaiian Honu
• Maintain a safe and comfortable distance from any Hawaiian Honu
• Perform a proper exit

1. Briefing
2. Entry
4. Identification of Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle features and markings.
5. If diving with a camera, take photographs of the turtle and any special markings.
7. Observe and note any Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle behavior. This can include feeding or avoidance actions such as banking away, or rapid diving or ascending, approaching and snapping.
8. Exit
   a. Prepare personal diving equipment
   b. Perform no decompression calculations.
   c. Perform proper predive safety check – BWRAF
10. Debriefing
11. Log dive

Open Water Dive Two

Performance Requirements
By the end of this open water training session you will be able to:
• Demonstrate a controlled entry and descent
• Demonstrate neutral buoyancy by hovering
• Identify any Hawaiian Honu distinctive features or markings
• Estimate the size and dimensions of any turtles encountered
• Observe Hawaiian Honu behavior
• Properly photograph a Hawaiian Honu
• **Maintain a safe and comfortable distance from any Hawaiian Honu**
• **Perform a proper exit**

1. Briefing
2. Entry
4. Identification of Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle features and markings.
5. If diving with a camera, take photographs of the turtle and any special markings.
7. Observe and note any Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle behavior. This can include feeding or avoidance actions such as banking away, or rapid diving or ascending, approaching and snapping.
8. Exit
9. Predive procedures
   a. Prepare personal dive equipment
   b. Perform no decompression calculations.
   c. Perform proper predive safety check – BWRAF
10. Debriefing
11. Log dive