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THURSDAY

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Body found at Kalalau identified

KALALAU — Police identified a man whose body was recovered from Kalalau Valley earlier this month as 43-year-old Sean Michael Rollnick, who reportedly lived on Kauai on and off for several years, but did not have a permanent address.

About 9 a.m. June 11, lifeguards were notified of a body near the shoreline of Kalalau Beach. Hanalei lifeguards on Jet Ski responded and confirmed that the body of an unknown Caucasian male was located along a remote portion of the rocky shoreline, according to a county news release.

The body was recovered by Rescue 3 aboard Air 1 then transported to Wilcox Hospital.

An autopsy performed last week determined that the cause of death was multiple blunt force trauma consistent with falling from a cliff. Officers do not suspect foul play.

There was no identification found with the body and at the time it was recovered there was no missing person report that matched the man's description.

A few days later, a friend of Rollnick notified police to report him missing as he had not seen or heard from him since, June 8.

Earlier this week, Kauai police identified the body as that of Rollnick through fingerprint analysis. Detectives then notified Rollnick's next of kin.

The Garden Island



Looking for justice for Amber Jackson

Local A6

Helping honu

Biologist urges people to be cautious on beaches during nesting season



DENNIS FUJIMOTO/THE GARDEN ISLAND

A honu makes its appearance Thursday during the final race of the Nawiliwili Yacht Club Junior Invitational Series at Nawiliwili Harbor.

Some question federal protections

Others say Hawaiian green sea turtles need to remain on Endangered Species List

Jessica Else
 THE GARDEN ISLAND

PRINCEVILLE — John McCaffrey, owner of a condo just off the eighth tee at the Princeville Makai Golf Course, said one of the best things about his little vacation rental is that it sits right above a place he knows as Honu Cove.

In fact, the little inlet has become so special, he adopted the name for marketing his condo and he said his guests frequently comment on the turtles they see from their cliff-top vantage point.

"Having the turtles around is a little bonus, because people — particularly those from the Mainland — don't get to see them on a regular basis," McCaffrey said. "On calm days, when the sun is shining, it's common to see five or six turtles in there."

He said he and his wife, Brenda, love seeing the turtles around Kauai, and on Oahu when they venture to that island.

"My wife grew up on the windward shore of Oahu and now, about 60 years later, she's seen over the many years that turtles are

coming back," McCaffrey said. "They were almost never seen at one point and now they're a fairly common sight in Hawaii."

The Hawaiian green sea turtle has been on the endangered species list since 1978, but with populations rebounding, some experts are calling for their removal from that list.

"The whole purpose of being on the list is to rebuild populations so they can be taken off the endangered species list," said Don Heacock, Kauai's aquatic district biologist at the Division of Aquatic Resources Branch of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. "We did

it with the bald eagle, the gray wolf and the California gray whale and turtle nesting is on the increase. The population is on the increase."

The national marine fisheries service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced in April the downgrading of the green sea turtle status from "endangered" to "threatened" on the Endangered Species List.

In a news release announcing the category downgrade, Catherine Kilduff of the Center for Biological Diversity, said the fact that green sea turtles

Jessica Else
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LIHUE — Before you cruise the beach over the next couple months, remember that there could be more under your tires than just sand.

It's turtle nesting season and the weight of a vehicle over a nest will compact the eggs too tightly in the sand for the keiki honu to wiggle out when it's time to hatch.

"Also, 4WD vehicles driving on beaches at night run the risk of running over the nesting female honu (green sea turtle)," said Don Heacock, Kauai's aquatic district biologist at the Division of Aquatic Resources Branch of the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Avoiding beach driving for the nesting season, which runs from May through July, and the July through September hatching season, is only one of the tips for helping the honu.

"Let sleeping turtles lie and watch them from a distance," Heacock said. "Don't feed them if they're in the water and keep discarded fishing lines, nets and plastic bags out of the water — pick them up and dispose of them properly."

Besides generally leaving the turtles alone and responsibly picking up after yourself, Heacock said there are a few special precautions to take during the nesting and hatching season.

He said it's best to nix bon fires, bright lights, and flash photography at night for the summer. The main

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SEE HONU, A7

Questions

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can overcome illegal harvest, plastic pollution and warming waters testifies to their resilience.

“The undeniable recovery of most green sea turtle populations creates a hopeful spot in our changing oceans,” Kilduff said.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Hawaiian green sea turtle popula-

tion has increased 53 percent over the last 25 years.

It’s estimated that Hawaii has fewer than 4,000 nesting green sea turtles, and 96 percent of them nest at French Frigate Shoals in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Some say the green sea turtle, which are believed to live around 60 years or longer, should remain protected.

“It is my opinion that turtles need to continue to be protected, given all the uncontrolled harm that comes

to them and other marine life: poisonous runoff entanglement in nets and longlines, loss of nesting sites by human development and shore damage from ever-larger storm waves, starvation from eating drifting plastic bags,” wrote Katherine Muzik in a previous report in *The Garden Island*.

Green sea turtles are currently protected under the Endangered Species Act, but they’re also protected by Hawaii state law, which means the species would still be defended if taken off the list.

On Kauai, Heacock responds on a management level to nearly all the sea turtle calls. He said an advantage to delisting the species is that the management funding would go to the state instead of being distributed through multiple sections of the government.

“If a turtle is being harassed, the state responds to those,” Heacock said. “Right now what’s happening is your tax dollars are going to three levels of government at the same time to do basically the same thing.”

Honu

Continued from A1

reason for this is that these types of bright lights can cause an adult female coming out of the ocean to lay her eggs to abandon the plan and go elsewhere.

It's also helpful for the newly hatched honu, which work together to dig themselves out of the nests at night.

"They run to the ocean as quickly as possible," Heacock said. "If bon fires are burning on a beach where honu hatch — and that could be nearly any beach on Kauai — the keiki honu will be disoriented by the bright light and will run directly into the fire."

According to a news release from DLNR, fishermen are encouraged to use barbless circle hooks and if it's safe for both the fisherman and the turtle, to release accidentally caught turtles themselves instead of calling a hotline.

Heacock said green sea turtles generally take be-

tween two and four years off in between nestings. One large female, which can reach four feet long and weigh nearly 400 pounds, can lay as many as six clutches, spaced two weeks apart. Each clutch can have more than 100 eggs.

Obvious digging activity and nesting evidence should be reported to Heacock or to the conservation hotline at 643-3567.

To report any injured sea turtle, or a turtle entangled in marine debris, contact Don Heacock at 645-0532, Katie Nalesere at 482-4297, or police dispatch at 241-1711.

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