

Marine life forced to swim in human waste off Makena

Sunday, November 14, 2004 8:20 AM

I work on a snorkel tour boat out of Maalaea Harbor. It was mid-morning on a beautiful October day. The ocean was very calm and glassy. Not a ripple anywhere so nothing on the surface could be hidden.

We were about 100 yards off of the Makena coast at a location some call Turtle Arches, others call it Turtle Town, still others call it Five Caves – the shoreline between Wailea and Big Beach.

There were a few different tour boats there, just like every day of the year. We had just pulled our mooring rope when I happened to look over the port side of the boat to see something that still sickens me to this day. It was a brown film of human feces about 30 yards long floating on the surface of the water.

The government allows boats and ships to use the ocean as their own private toilet but by law the craft has to be three miles off the coast before it can dump its fecal matter. One of the boats there that morning had either a stuck dump valve or someone had accidentally opened a dump valve.

Just as we were pulling away, I witnessed a young sea turtle surfacing for air and in doing so stuck its little head right through that film of human waste. It almost was enough to make me puke and was definitely enough to make me feel ashamed of being human.

Michael Gardner

Kihei

Copyright © 2005 **The Maui News.**