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San Francisco's Ocean Beach
Photography by Phil Schermeister

★ Special Insert

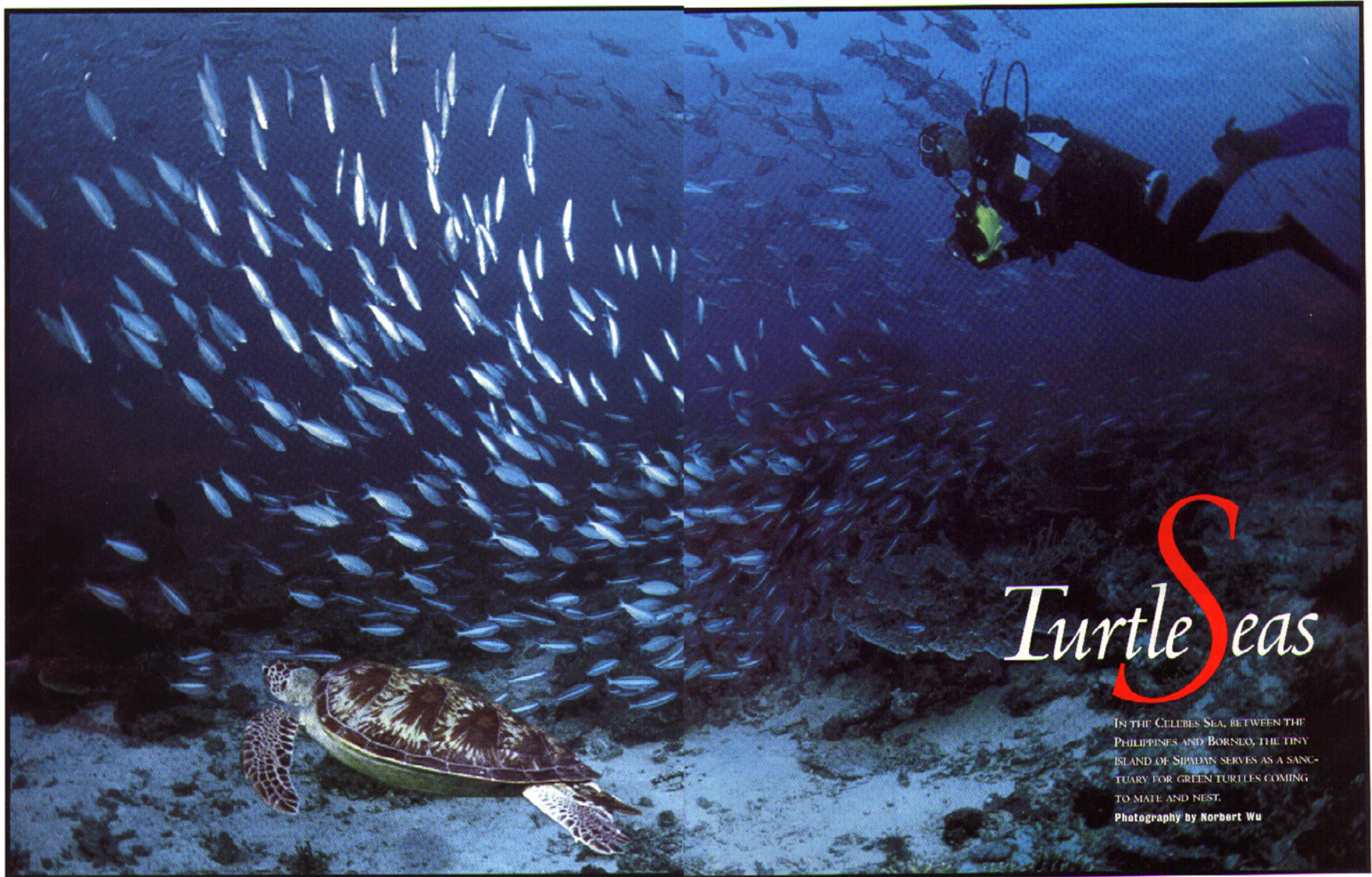
Your Guide to the National Audubon Society

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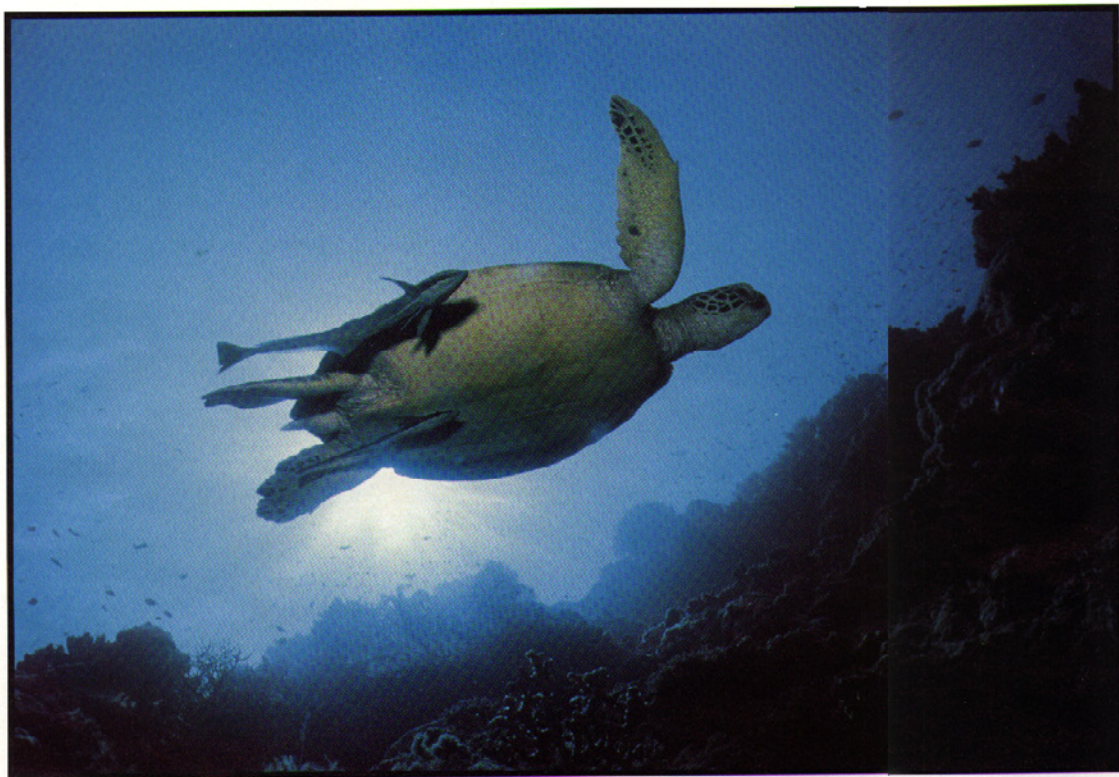
ON THE COVER:
An endangered
California gnat-
catcher, in the path
of development.
(Photograph by B.
"Moose" Peterson)



Turtle Seas

IN THE CELEBES SEA, BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND BORNEO, THE TINY ISLAND OF SIPADAN SERVES AS A SANCTUARY FOR GREEN TURTLES COMING TO MATE AND NEST.

Photography by Norbert Wu



APPEARING TO FLY THROUGH THE SEAS, TURTLES ARE ACCOMPANIED BY REMORAS, FISH THAT FEED ALONG WITH THEM (LEFT).

Green turtles may live as long as 100 years, migrating for thousands of miles through the islands of the South Pacific and feeding among coral beds, seaweed, and grasses.



A HAVEN FOR DIVERS, SIPADAN IS A CORAL ISLAND NO BIGGER THAN A CITY PARK, FORMED ATOP A VOLCANO. THE ISLAND'S SEA TURTLES, STILL HUNTED BY THE THOUSANDS FOR THEIR FLESH AND EGGS, ARE PROTECTED BY TOUR COMPANIES.







AFTER MATING OFF-SHORE, THE FEMALES DIG INTO THE SOFT BEACH SAND AND LAY SOME 100 EGGS PER NEST. THE EGGS HATCH TWO MONTHS LATER, AND THE HATCHLINGS DIG BLINDLY UP THROUGH THE SAND (FEMALES FROM THE WARMEST PARTS OF THE NEST, MALES FROM THE COOLEST) AND SCRAMBLE TOWARD THE SEA. THEY THEN SWIM NONSTOP FOR DAYS UNTIL THEY REACH A SEA CURRENT IN WHICH TO DRIFT.



HATCHLINGS (ABOVE) MUST ESCAPE THE DANGERS OF SEABIRDS, SHARKS, AND ANEMONES.

Their long lives don't guarantee survival for the turtles. They don't mate until they're at least 30, and they may be hooked, speared, or netted by fishermen long before they ever get to nest.