
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DESIGNATION OF APRIL 19 AS "HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL DAY".

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawaiian monk
2 seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) is in crisis as the population is
3 in a decline that has lasted 20 years and only around 1200 monk
4 seals remain. Scientific modeling predicts the species'
5 population will fall below 1000 animals in the next five years.
6 Like the extinct Caribbean monk seal and the critically
7 endangered Mediterranean monk seal, the Hawaiian monk seal is
8 headed to extinction if urgent action is not taken.

9 The Hawaiian monk seal was listed as an endangered species
10 pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on November 23,
11 1976 and remains listed as endangered. The species has a
12 recovery priority number of one, based on the high magnitude of
13 threats, the high recovery potential, and the potential for
14 economic conflicts while implementing recovery actions.

15 The Hawaiian monk seal has the distinction of being the
16 only endangered marine mammal whose entire species range,
17 historical and current, lies within the United States. The



1 the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands with six main breeding sub-
2 populations. The species is also found in lower numbers in the
3 main Hawaiian Islands where the population size and range both
4 appear to be expanding.

5 For more than two decades, great effort has been made to
6 manage, study and recover the Hawaiian monk seal. However,
7 actions to date have not been sufficient to result in a
8 recovering population. The species status would undoubtedly
9 have been worse but for these actions. Nonetheless, significant
10 threats still face this species. In the Northwest Hawaiian
11 Islands their threats include food limitation, entanglement in
12 marine debris, shark predation, and male aggression. In the
13 main Hawaiian Islands the threats of human disturbance, habitat
14 loss, infectious disease, and fishery interactions occur.

15 The purpose of this Act is to establish April 19 of each
16 year as Hawaiian Monk Seal Day.

17 SECTION 2. Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
18 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
19 read as follows:

20 "§8-A Hawaiian Monk Seal Day. April 19 of each year shall
21 be known and designated as "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day", provided



1 that this day is not and shall not be construed to be a state
2 holiday."

3 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
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INTRODUCED BY:

Callie Meyer [Signature]

[Signature]
Tom Bower
Maif B. Lee

[Signature]

[Signature]
Kahn
Rida Cabanilla


Phil. Karamita
John M. Magro
[Signature]
[Signature]

Ken Ward
Ann W. Cling
[Signature]

[Signature]
Marcelly Maynez

Della A. Belatti
Barbara Mammatte




Cindy Evans
Cynthia Thelen


Mel Carroll
M. Miller
Karen Curran

JAN 18 2008



Report Title:

Monk Seal

Description:

Establishes April 19 of each year as Hawaiian Monk Seal Day in Hawaii.

