
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DESIGNATION OF THE HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL AS THE
STATE MAMMAL OF HAWAII.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawaiian monk seal
2 (*Monachus schauinslandi*) is in crisis as the population is in a
3 decline that has lasted 20 years and only around 1200 monk seals
4 remain. Scientific modeling predicts the species' population
5 will fall below 1000 animals in the next five years. Like the
6 extinct Caribbean monk seal and the critically endangered
7 Mediterranean monk seal, the Hawaiian monk seal is headed to
8 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 majority of the population of Hawaiian monk seals now lies in
2 the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands with six main breeding sub-
3 populations. The species is also found in lower numbers in the
4 main Hawaiian Islands where the population size and range both
5 appear to be expanding.

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

16 The purpose of this Act is to make the Hawaiian monk seal
17 (*Monachus schauinslandi*) the official state mammal of Hawaii.

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
19 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
20 read as follows:



1 "§5-A State mammal. The Hawaiian monk seal (Monachus
 2 schauinslandi), also known as the 'Ilio-holo-i-ka-uaua, is
 3 established and designated as the official mammal of the State."

4 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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Report Title:

Emblems and symbols

Description:

Designates the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the state mammal.

