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# SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE OF HAWAII TO RECOGNIZE THE THIRD SATURDAY OF EVERY APRIL AS "HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL DAY" AND TO COORDINATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOVERY PLAN FOR THE HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL WITH THE FEDERAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS.

1           WHEREAS, the Hawaiian monk seal (*monachus schauinslandi*) is  
2 endemic to the Hawaiian islands and known to native Hawaiians as  
3 *ilio-holo-i-ka-uaua*, or "dog running in rough seas"; and  
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5           WHEREAS, the Hawaiian monk seal is one of the world's most  
6 critically endangered marine mammals and the nation's most  
7 endangered endemic marine mammal; and  
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9           WHEREAS, the Hawaiian monk seal was designated Hawaii's  
10 official state mammal on July 1, 2008, by Act 72, Session Laws  
11 of Hawaii 2008; and  
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13           WHEREAS, the Hawaiian monk seal, as a species, is thirteen  
14 million years old, older than the islands of Maui and Hawaii;  
15 and  
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17           WHEREAS, fewer than twelve hundred Hawaiian monk seals  
18 remain in the Hawaiian archipelago; and  
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20           WHEREAS, the Hawaiian monk seal may be the last of its  
21 genus to survive because the Caribbean monk seal was last  
22 sighted in the 1950s and officially declared extinct in June  
23 2008, and the Mediterranean monk seal has declined to the small  
24 population of approximately five hundred; and  
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26           WHEREAS, human and environmental factors such as habitat  
27 loss, competition for food supply, marine debris entanglement,  
28 disease, shark predation, and climate change have contributed to  
29 the species decline; and  
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31           WHEREAS, Hawaiian monk seals are protected by the federal  
32 Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, P.L. 93-205, as amended  
33 (MMPA) and the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, P.L. 95-

1 522, as amended (ESA), which listed the Hawaiian monk seal as  
2 endangered in 1976; and

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4 WHEREAS, the MMA and ESA protect the species and the  
5 ecosystems on which they depend, and make harming, harassing,  
6 taking, or killing these animals subject to fines of up to  
7 \$50,000; and

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9 WHEREAS, most of the Hawaiian monk seal population exists  
10 in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands where the seal population is  
11 rapidly declining at the rate of four per cent per year; and

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13 WHEREAS, the population of Hawaiian monk seals found in the  
14 main Hawaiian islands is increasing slightly from its current  
15 population estimated at between one hundred and one hundred  
16 fifty monk seals; and

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18 WHEREAS, the Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Monk Seal  
19 (*Monachus schauinslandi*), Second Revision, (Recovery Plan) was  
20 approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service of the  
21 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in August  
22 2007; and

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24 WHEREAS, the Recovery Plan includes the need for public  
25 education and outreach to develop best practices for humans to  
26 enable the seals to survive; and

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28 WHEREAS, Earth Day, which is a recognition of the  
29 importance of earth's biodiversity, is celebrated in the month  
30 of April; and

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32 WHEREAS, every third Saturday of April is the day NOAA  
33 conducts a statewide monk seal count; now, therefore,

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35 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth  
36 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009,  
37 that the State of Hawaii is urged to designate the third  
38 Saturday of every April as "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day" to coincide  
39 with NOAA's statewide semi-annual monk seal count; and

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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this day be designated as a day  
42 to educate residents and visitors about how to protect this  
43 critically endangered species; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and  
2 Natural Resources coordinate with the county governments and  
3 NOAA to implement the Recovery Plan; and  
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
6 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the  
7 Board of Land and Natural Resources, mayors of the counties,  
8 chairpersons of the county councils, and Administrator of NOAA.