

MAR 16 2011

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING A STUDY ON PROHIBITING THE COLLECTION OF HAWAII'S
ENDEMIC MARINE ORNAMENTAL FISH FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.

1 WHEREAS, ornamental fish are fish that are kept in
2 aquariums and prized for their beauty and rarity; and
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4 WHEREAS, recent studies have shown that Hawaii's coral
5 reefs and ornamental fisheries are under severe stress from
6 ocean acidification, non-point source pollution, unsustainable
7 fishing practices, and the ornamental fish aquarium trade; and
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9 WHEREAS, there are one hundred three species of fish that
10 are collected in Hawaii, and forty-five per cent of the top
11 twenty collected species are endemic to Hawaii; and
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13 WHEREAS, ornamental fish collectors capture large amounts
14 of targeted fish species, which results in their exploitation;
15 and
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17 WHEREAS, more than fifty per cent of ornamental fish
18 species die within a week of being in captivity; and
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20 WHEREAS, according to a recent study of the aquarium trade,
21 there has been a significant decline in ornamental fish biomass
22 in areas where the aquarium collection trade is not regulated as
23 compared to areas where it is regulated; and
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25 WHEREAS, for instance, in unregulated areas there has been
26 a fifty-eight per cent decline in the achilles' tang, a fifty-
27 four per cent decline in the longnose butterflyfish, a forty-
28 seven per cent decline in the yellow tang, and a forty-six per
29 cent decline in the moorish idol; and
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31 WHEREAS, fish-collecting practices associated with the
32 aquarium collection trade have damaged coral reefs in the
33 following ways:



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- 2 (1) Nets entangle the reef and branching corals are
- 3 damaged when aquarium collectors set and retrieve
- 4 their nets;
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- 6 (2) Coral is broken as collectors grab fish or pound the
- 7 coral with sticks to flush fish out of hiding; and
- 8
- 9 (3) Kneeling on the coral causes the coral to become prone
- 10 to disease; and
- 11

12 WHEREAS, studies show that eighty per cent of collected
13 fish are herbivores, such as the yellow tang, that feed on
14 algae, and over collecting such fish decimates their
15 populations, which directly increases algae overgrowth, a main
16 contributor of coral degradation; and

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18 WHEREAS, the decrease of fish biomass threatens the
19 survival of marine species and coral reefs because high
20 biodiversity is necessary for coral reef health and other
21 species stability; and

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23 WHEREAS, news reports indicate that the number of reef fish
24 in Hawaii has declined by sixty per cent in the past twenty
25 years; and

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27 WHEREAS, Hawaii's tourism industry is dependent on the
28 health of Hawaii's aquatic ecosystem, with roughly thirty-five
29 per cent of Hawaii's jobs related to the visitor industry and
30 reef tourism generating \$1,000,000,000 annually for the State's
31 economy; and

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33 WHEREAS, in contrast, aquarium collectors contribute
34 \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 annually to Hawaii's economy; and

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36 WHEREAS, the commercial aquarium fish trade violates the
37 traditional Hawaiian value, "Malama aina," which discourages
38 destructive fishing practices such as overfishing and waste, and
39 instead supports sustainability and the protection of fish
40 species so that the species thrive and the ecosystem is
41 balanced; and

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43 WHEREAS, the loss of Hawaii's beautiful coral reefs and
44 endemic fish species poses a significant threat to the public



1 welfare and without intervention could deprive future
2 generations of Hawaii residents of having the opportunity to
3 learn about and enjoy Hawaii's ocean environment; now,
4 therefore,
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6 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-sixth
7 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2011, the
8 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Land
9 and Natural Resources is requested to study the efficacy of
10 prohibiting the collection of Hawaii's endemic marine ornamental
11 fish for commercial purposes, with the exception of permits
12 sought for propagation or educational, medical, or scientific
13 purposes; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and
16 Natural Resources is requested to submit a report of its
17 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
18 legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior
19 to the convening of the 2012 Regular Session; and
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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
22 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
23 Board of Land and Natural Resources.
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OFFERED BY:

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