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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO OPIHI.

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

1           SECTION 1. In the past century, there was a ten-fold  
2 decline in the amount of opihi available in markets, and the  
3 average amount of opihi has further been halved in the past  
4 forty years. The people of Hawaii, opihi harvesters, university  
5 scientists, and marine resource managers agree that the  
6 popularity of opihi as a delicacy has led to overharvesting  
7 statewide and the decline of natural populations. Notably, the  
8 island of Oahu has been hit especially hard, where *Cellana*  
9 *exarata* and *Cellana sandwicensis* are rare, and *Cellana talcosa*  
10 is functionally absent.

11           Opihi comprise four species of saltwater Hawaiian limpets  
12 and are found nowhere else on earth. The blackfoot opihi  
13 (*Cellana exarata*), also known as "opihi makaiauli", is found on  
14 the upper portion of wave-washed intertidal shores from Puhahonu  
15 (Gardner Pinnacles) to the island of Hawaii. The yellowfoot  
16 opihi (*Cellana sandwicensis*), also known as "opihi alinalina",  
17 is found on the middle-low portion of wave-washed intertidal  
18 shores from Mokupapapa (French Frigate Shoals) to the island of



1 Hawaii. Opihi koele, also known as the "kneecap" opihi (Cellana  
2 talcosa), is found from the shallow subtidal to the middle  
3 intertidal zone on shores from Niihau and Kauai to Hawaii. The  
4 greenfoot opihi (Cellana melanostoma) is commonly observed  
5 throughout the intertidal zone from Puhahonu to Nihoa, and is  
6 less commonly observed in the main Hawaiian islands.

7 Although opihi can be collected year-round, opihi shells  
8 must be at least one and one-fourth inches in the longest  
9 dimension, or the meat must be at least one-half inch in length,  
10 to be legally harvested in Hawaii.

11 The key to increasing the sustainable harvest of opihi  
12 populations is protecting a portion of the populations so that  
13 they may reproduce and create the next generation. Fisheries  
14 replenishment/management areas are a promising management tool  
15 to protect breeding populations, while allowing harvest in  
16 unprotected areas. The life cycle of opihi is perfectly suited  
17 to this management strategy because the adults will stay within  
18 the protected areas, and the opihi larvae can disperse within an  
19 island and replenish both harvested and protected areas.

20 The purpose of this Act is to rehabilitate the natural  
21 populations of all Hawaiian opihi species and establish a new  
22 direction for the management of the fishery. This Act is



1 intended to increase both long-term standing-stock opihi  
2 abundance, as well as the amount of opihi available for use by  
3 the people of Hawaii.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 188, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
5 amended by adding two new sections to be appropriately  
6 designated and to read as follows:

7 **"§188-A Opihi harvesting and possession; restricted. (a)**  
8 Except as provided in this section, it shall be unlawful for any  
9 person at any time to take, harvest, or possess opihi from any  
10 coastal area or nearshore waters of off-shore islets in the  
11 State, including those islands listed in the Atlas of Hawaii,  
12 Third Edition (1998), man-made jetties and breakwaters, as well  
13 as fishery management areas, fisheries replenishment areas,  
14 natural area reserves, refuges, and marine life conservation  
15 districts established by the department of land and natural  
16 resources, division of aquatic resources.

17 (b) It shall be unlawful for any person at any time of the  
18 year to take or harvest opihi from below the waterline, or  
19 possess opihi taken from below the waterline, of any coastal  
20 area or nearshore waters of the islands of the State.



1        (c) It shall be unlawful for a person to be in possession  
2 of at least one item from each of the following paragraphs, at  
3 the same time:

4        (1) Equipment or any apparatus that would allow a person  
5 to see and remain underwater, such as a swimming mask,  
6 snorkel, or self-contained underwater breathing  
7 apparatus; and

8        (2) Live opihi.

9        (d) Notwithstanding subsection (a), any person may take or  
10 harvest opihi from above the waterline of the coastal areas or  
11 nearshore waters of the State from June 1 through August 30 and  
12 December 1 through January 31.

13        (e) It shall be unlawful for any person to take or harvest  
14 an amount greater than one quart of opihi with shells attached,  
15 or one-half pint of opihi without shells attached, per day  
16 during the open seasons, as described in subsection (d).

17        (f) The division of aquatic resources of the department of  
18 land and natural resources shall submit an annual report on the  
19 effectiveness and enforcement of this section to the legislature  
20 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular  
21 session commencing with the regular session of 2015 and  
22 continuing through the regular session of 2019.



1        (g) The Kahoolawe island reserve commission shall govern  
2 the taking, harvesting, or possessing of opihi in the Kahoolawe  
3 island reserve, including the islands of Puukoa and Aleale.

4        (h) This section shall not apply to any person exercising  
5 native Hawaiian gathering rights and traditional practices as  
6 authorized by law, or as permitted by the department of land and  
7 natural resources pursuant to article XII, section 7, of the  
8 Hawaii State Constitution.

9        (i) As used in this section, "opihi" means all known  
10 Hawaiian opihi species, including Cellana exarata (blackfoot),  
11 Cellana sandwicencis (yellowfoot), Cellana talcosa (koele), and  
12 Cellana melanostoma (greenfoot).

13        **§188-B Opihi harvesting or taking; Oahu; prohibited.**  
14 Except as provided in section 188-A(h), and notwithstanding any  
15 other provision to the contrary, until July 1, 2019, it shall be  
16 unlawful for any person at any time to take or harvest opihi  
17 from the coastal areas or nearshore waters of the island of  
18 Oahu."

19        SECTION 3. In codifying the new sections added by section  
20 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute  
21 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating  
22 the new sections in this Act.

1 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

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



**Report Title:**

Conservation and Resources; Resource Management; Opihi

**Description:**

Establishes a moratorium on the harvesting of opihi on Oahu until July 1, 2019. Establishes a ban on taking or harvesting opihi statewide from coastal areas or nearshore waters of off-shore islets in the State, man-made jetties and breakwaters, and certain protected areas; from below the waterline of coastal areas or nearshore waters of the islands of the State; and from above the waterline of coastal areas or nearshore waters of the State during closed seasons. Prohibits taking or harvesting of more than certain amounts of opihi per day during open seasons. Preserves native Hawaiian gathering rights and cultural practices. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

