

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO OAHU CORAL REEF RESILIENCE ENHANCEMENT.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that coral reefs provide
2 extremely valuable goods and services for the State and its
3 residents, including coastal protection from erosion due to
4 increasing sea levels and larger ocean swells as the ocean
5 warms, sand production that replenishes beaches, as well as
6 fisheries, recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Many
7 reefs around the island of Oahu are widely known to be among the
8 most degraded in Hawaii, due to poor land use practices that
9 buried corals with silt run-off and smothered corals with
10 seaweeds fertilized by leaching sewage and fertilizer run-off.
11 Increasing ocean warming is now causing more frequent and severe
12 coral bleaching events that kill corals and are predicted to be
13 annual events by about 2040. Ocean acidification and other
14 pollutants also negatively affect corals.

15 The legislature further finds that one of the most
16 effective ways to help corals withstand and recover from ongoing
17 and future threats is to ensure that there are many herbivorous



1 fishes on our reefs, particularly surgeonfishes (kala and
2 others), chubs (nenu), and parrotfishes (uhu). These fishes
3 are known to crop seaweeds that would otherwise smother corals,
4 providing space on the reefs for new corals to grow, especially
5 after coral bleaching events. The abundance of herbivorous
6 fishes around Oahu is by far the lowest in Hawaii. In response,
7 the board of land and natural resources passed statewide
8 herbivore fishing regulations in December 2023 through
9 administrative rules. In December 2024, pursuant to House
10 Resolution No. 69 (2024) and Senate Resolution No. 104, S.D. 1,
11 (2024), a panel of experts on herbivorous fishes in Hawaii
12 concurred with recent statewide surveys by the National Oceanic
13 and Atmospheric Administration documenting that the abundances
14 of kala, nenu, and uhu are extremely low around Oahu and
15 require far more intensive management so these populations can
16 recover to levels necessary to enhance the resilience of coral
17 reefs.

18 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 19 (1) Limit the amount of kala, nenu, and uhu fish that may
20 be taken from state waters around the island of Oahu
21 for a period of ten years; and



(2) Require the division of aquatic resources to conduct population assessments of these fishes and report to the legislature.

SECTION 2. Chapter 188, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§188- Bag limit; kala; nenu; uhu; reports. (a)

Except for commercial fishing permittees and dealers as provided in section 13-95-11(e) and (g), Hawaii Administrative Rules, in state waters around the island of Oahu, it shall be unlawful for any person to take more than two kala per day or possess more than two kala at any one time.

(b) In state waters around the island of Oahu, it shall be unlawful for any person to take more than four nenu per day or possess more than four nenu at any one time.

(c) Except for commercial fishing permittees and dealers as provided in section 13-95-16(f) and (h), Hawaii Administrative Rules, in state waters around the island of Oahu, it shall be unlawful for any person to take spectacled parrotfish, and it shall be unlawful for any person to take more



1 than one uhu of any other species per day or possess more than
2 one uhu or any other species at any one time.

3 (d) The division of aquatic resources of the department
4 shall conduct population assessments of kala, nenu, and uhu in
5 state waters around the island of Oahu every two years and
6 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including
7 any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than
8 twenty days prior to the convening of the immediately following
9 regular session.

10 (e) As used in this section:

11 "Kala" means any fish known as Naso unicornis or bluespine
12 unicornfish or any recognized synonyms.

13 "Nenu" means any fish belonging to the genus Kyphosus or
14 any recognized synonyms.

15 "Spectacled parrotfish" means any fish known as Chlorurus
16 perspicillatus or any recognized synonyms.

17 "Uhu" means any fish belonging to the family Scaridae or
18 any recognized synonyms. "Uhu" is a general term for
19 parrotfish."

20 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, and
2 shall be repealed on June 30, 2035.

3

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. L.', is written over a horizontal line.



S.B. NO. 1262

Report Title:

Fishing; Division of Aquatic Resources; Regulations; Bag Limits

Description:

Establishes bag limits for kala, nenuke, and uhu fish around the island of Oahu. Requires the Division of Aquatic Resources to conduct population assessments of these fishes and report to the Legislature. Sunsets on 6/30/2035.

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

