

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE RECOVERY OF THE HAWAII STATE MAMMAL, THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ENDEMIC HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Monk Seal, *Monachus schauinslandi*, is a critically endangered seal that is endemic to the waters off the Hawaiian Islands and was known to the native Hawaiians as *Ilio-holo-i-ka-uaua*, or “dog that runs in rough waters”; and,

WHEREAS, to raise awareness for the species’ plight, the Hawaiian Monk Seal was declared Hawaii’s official State Mammal on June 11, 2008 by Lieutenant Governor James Aiona; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Monk Seals are among the most endangered species of all seals, although the Mediterranean Monk Seal is even rarer, and the Caribbean Monk Seal, last sighted in the 1950’s, was officially declared extinct in June 2008; and

WHEREAS, the population of the Hawaiian Monk Seal continues to decline and, in 2008, it is estimated that only 12,000 remain throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, human and environmental factors such as habitat loss, competition for food supply, marine debris entanglement, disease, shark predation, and climate change have contributed to the species decline; and

WHEREAS, Hawaiian Monk Seals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which listed the Hawaiian Monk Seal endangered in 1976; and

WHEREAS, the MMPA and ESA protect the species and the ecosystems upon which they depend, and individuals harming, harassing, taking or killing these animals are subject to fines of up to \$50,000; and

WHEREAS, these laws require that governmental agencies recover and prevent this species from going extinct; and

WHEREAS, most of the Hawaiian Monk Seal population exists in the Northwest Hawaiian Island (NWHI) where the seals are declining rapidly; and

WHEREAS, there are 100-150 seals found in the Main Hawaiian Islands and this subpopulation is increasing; and

WHEREAS, the waters off Kauai and Niihau has the highest concentration of Hawaiian Monk Seals in the Main Hawaiian Islands; and

WHEREAS, saving the Hawaiian Monk Seal from extinction requires developing government and private partnerships to raise public and visitor awareness about the response and recovery programs; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan, signed by the National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA Administrator on August 2007 requires a budget of approximately \$7 million to adequately fund the recovery programs in this plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2008 federal budget approved for the recovery plan was approximately \$2.1 million which may possibly receive an increase of up to \$4 million; and

WHEREAS, the ESA and MMPA requires the State of Hawai'i to write an Incidental Take Plan for mammals taken in commercial and recreational fisheries, to which includes adequate responses to fishing interactions and other harmful interactions and human disturbances; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF KAUAI, STATE OF HAWAI'I, that it urges the Federal Administration and Congress to adequately fund the Hawai'ian Monk Seal Recovery Plan with a budget of \$7 million in 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE STATE OF HAWAI'I adequately fund the Main Hawai'ian Island Monk Seal Response and the Incidental Take Plan programs within the Department of Land and Natural Resources- Aquatics Division with a \$1 million annual budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the four (4) counties of Hawai'i partner with the appropriate federal and state agencies to develop public awareness of the Hawai'ian Monk Seal and develop a program for regulating human-seal interactions at State/County beaches and parks that monk seals frequent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Carlos M. Gutierrez, the Secretary of Commerce; Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Under Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Administrator; Jim Balsiger, Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA; U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye; U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka; U.S. House Representative Neil Abercrombie; U.S. House Representative Mazie Hirono; Hawai'i State Governor Linda Lingle; Hawai'i State Senator Collen Hanabusa; Hawai'i State Representative Calvin K. Y. Say; Kauai County Mayor Bill "Kaipo" Asing; Honolulu City and County Mayor Mufi Hannemann; Maui County Mayor Charmaine Tavares; Hawai'i County Mayor Harry Kim; City and County of Honolulu Council Chair Barbara Marshall; Maui County Council Chair G. Riki Hokama; and Hawai'i County Council Chair Pete Hoffmann.

Introduced by: JOANN A. YUKIMURA

MEL RAPOZO