
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WILDLIFE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State's native
2 and endangered species are an essential part of the State's
3 natural and cultural heritage and require strong legal
4 protections. Among these species, the Hawaiian green sea
5 turtle, or honu, is given special protection under state and
6 federal law due to population declines caused by human
7 interaction and environmental impacts.

8 The legislature further finds that the handling of turtles
9 by the public continues to occur despite existing penalties. In
10 November 2025, a widely circulated video depicted an
11 individually unlawfully handling a honu, sparking public concern
12 and highlighting the problems of the existing enforcement
13 penalties. Under existing law, the minimum fine for handling an
14 endangered species may be as low as \$250.

15 The legislature believes that stronger penalties are
16 necessary to discourage unlawful handling and ensure meaningful
17 protection for endangered turtles.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to increase
2 deterrence and confirm the State's commitment to the
3 preservation of the State's endangered wildlife by increasing
4 the fines for taking or harassing protected turtles in the
5 State.

6 SECTION 2. Section 195D-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

8 "(a) Any person who violates any of the provisions of this
9 chapter or the provisions of any rule adopted pursuant to this
10 chapter shall be guilty of:

11 (1) A misdemeanor for a first offense, punishable by a
12 fine of [~~no~~] not less than \$250 or by imprisonment of
13 [~~no~~] not more than one year, or both; [~~and~~] provided
14 that if the offense involved a turtle, by a fine of
15 not less than \$2,500 or by imprisonment of not more
16 than one year, or both; and

17 (2) A class C felony for a second or subsequent offense
18 and upon conviction shall be subject to one or any
19 combination of the following:



- 1 (A) A fine of [~~no~~] not less than \$1,000; provided
- 2 that if the offense involved a turtle, a fine of
- 3 not less than \$5,000;
- 4 (B) Imprisonment of [~~no~~] not more than two years; or
- 5 (C) Rehabilitative community service."

6 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
7 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
8 begun before its effective date.

9 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
10 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

11 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

Turtles; Honu; Take; Handling; Harassment; Fines; Increase

Description:

Increases the fines for taking or harassing protected turtles in the State. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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