

ACT 72

S.B. NO. 2464

A Bill for an Act Relating to the State Mammal.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) is the only marine mammal whose entire species range lies within the United States. It is one of only two endemic mammals found in Hawaii.

On November 23, 1976, it was listed as an endangered species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act and it remains listed as endangered today. The population of the Hawaiian monk seal has been in a 20-year constant decline and today there are only approximately 1,200 remaining. The majority of this population is in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, while there are an estimated 80 monk seals living in the main Hawaiian Islands.

In 1979, the legislature designated the humpback whale as the official marine mammal of the State. Part of the purpose for doing so was to increase awareness

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about the humpback whale, which was on the brink of extinction in the 60s. As a result of an increase in awareness regarding the humpback whale, its numbers have markedly increased. A purpose in designating the Hawaiian monk seal as the official state mammal is to raise awareness of it as an endangered species with the hope that this awareness will, like the humpback whale, result in increased protection and its repopulation.

The purpose of this Act is to recognize the importance and uniqueness of the Hawaiian monk seal to the Hawaiian Islands by establishing and designating the Hawaiian monk seal as the official state mammal.

SECTION 2. Chapter 5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§5- State mammal. The Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) is established and designated as the official mammal of the State.”

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

(Approved May 14, 2008.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.