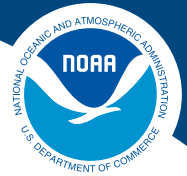


SPECIES in the SPOTLIGHT

Priority Actions 2021–2025



NOAA
FISHERIES



Hawaiian
Monk Seal
(*Neomonachus
schauinslandi*)





The *Species in the Spotlight* Initiative

In 2015, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) launched the *Species in the Spotlight* initiative to provide immediate, targeted efforts to halt declines and stabilize populations, focus resources within and outside of NOAA on the most at-risk species, guide agency actions where we have discretion to make investments, increase public awareness and support for these species, and expand partnerships. We have renewed the initiative for 2021-2025.

The criteria for *Species in the Spotlight* are that they are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), their populations are declining, and they are considered a recovery priority #1C (84 FR 18243, 4/30/2019). A recovery priority #1C species is one whose extinction is almost certain in the immediate future because of rapid population decline or habitat destruction, and because of conflicts with construction, development, or economic activity.

As of January 2021, the following nine species are our *Species in the Spotlight*.

- Atlantic salmon Gulf of Maine distinct population segment (DPS)
- Central California Coast coho salmon evolutionarily significant unit (ESU)
- Cook Inlet beluga whale DPS
- Hawaiian monk seal
- North Atlantic right whale (added in 2019)
- Pacific leatherback sea turtle
- Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon ESU
- Southern resident killer whale DPS
- White abalone

For some of these species, their numbers are so low that they need to be bred in captivity; others are facing human threats that must be addressed to prevent their

extinction. In most cases, we understand the limiting factors and threats to these species, and we know that the necessary management actions have a high probability of success. In some cases, we are prioritizing research to better understand the threats so we can fine-tune our actions for the maximum effect. We know we can't do this alone. A major part of the *Species in the Spotlight* initiative is to expand partnerships and motivate individuals to work with us to get these species on the road to recovery.

Priority Action Plans

The 5-year action plan is part of a strategy to marshal resources for species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) for which immediate, targeted efforts are vital for stabilizing their populations and preventing their extinction.

In its first 5 years, the *Species in the Spotlight* initiative has been successful at raising awareness, increasing partnerships, and prioritizing funding—providing or leveraging more than \$113 million towards projects that will help stabilize these highly at-risk species.

We renewed the *Species in the Spotlight* initiative for 2021-2025, and have updated the priority action plans that outline what we need to do to prevent their extinction.

The 2021-2025 5-year action plans build upon existing action, recovery, or conservation plans and detail the focused efforts needed over the next 5 years to reduce threats and stabilize population declines. We will continue to engage our partners in the public and private sectors in actions they can take to support this important effort. We will report on our progress through the [Biennial Recovering Threatened and Endangered Species Report to Congress](#), and on our [Species in the Spotlight](#) web pages.

This strategy will continue to guide agency actions where we have the discretion to make critical investments to safeguard these most endangered species. The strategy will not divert resources away from the important and continued efforts to support all ESA-listed species under our authority. Many of our species have long-standing conservation programs supported by multiple partners. We remain committed to those programs.

This action plan highlights the actions that can be taken by us, other federal and state resource agencies, environmental organizations, Native American Tribes and other partners to work toward turning the trend around for this species from a declining trajectory toward recovery. We appreciate all of our current partners and collaborators, as the steps we need to take to stabilize these species would not be possible without them.

NOAA Fisheries Contacts

If you are interested in working with us, or if you have questions about any of the priority actions contained in this plan, please contact:

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Hawaiian Monk Seal Status

The Hawaiian monk seal is one of NOAA Fisheries' priority species because there are only about 1,400 Hawaiian monk seals left in the world, and they are just beginning to show signs of recovery after at least 60 years of steep population decline. The Hawaiian monk seal is one of the most endangered pinnipeds in the world, and the last surviving species in its genus. Hawaiian monk seals occur only in the Hawaiian Islands Archipelago, which stretches 1,500 miles from Hawaii Island to Kure Atoll (Figure 1). Hawaiian monk seals are the only marine mammal species whose recovery and management falls entirely under the jurisdiction of the United States.

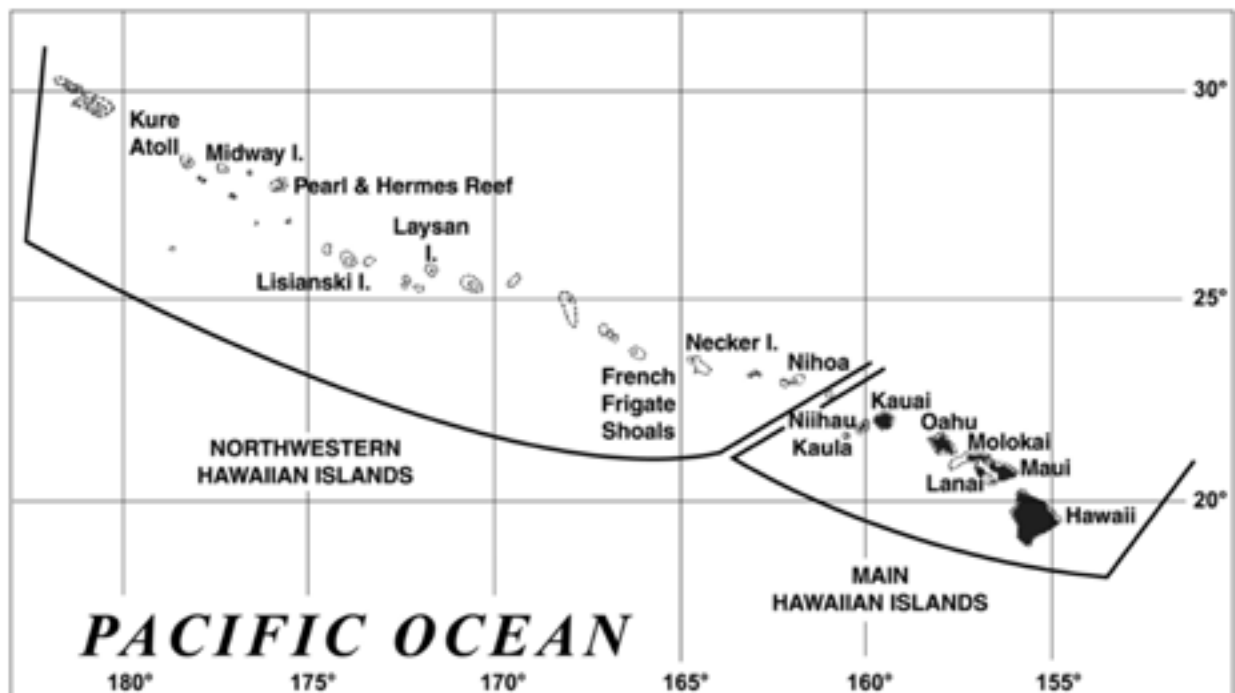


Figure 1. Hawaiian monk seals are native to the Hawaiian Archipelago and found nowhere else in the world. Monk seals are able to move freely between the inhabited main Hawaiian Islands and the uninhabited Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.



Two weaned pups rest along the shoreline of Kalaupapa National Historical Park on the island of Molokai. Credit: Tracy Mercer, NOAA Fisheries

Hawaiian Monk Seal Key Conservation Efforts/Challenges

Although much more work remains before the species recovers, NOAA Fisheries and our partners have made significant headway in reducing the extinction risk of Hawaiian monk seals. We are working diligently across the archipelago to address the many threats impacting the species. The majority of the monk seal population (~1,100 animals) inhabits the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, where we have focused intensive conservation and research efforts for over 30 years (Lowry et al. 2011), with a smaller population (~300) in the main Hawaiian Islands that has been growing since the early 1990s. Recovery interventions have proven successful thus far: the current population is up to 30 percent larger than it would be without these efforts (Harting et al. 2014). We are equipped with the plans, permits, and key stakeholder support to carry on a bold recovery initiative that has successfully halted the population decline in the short term and, if sustained, will continue to foster and accelerate recovery for the next 5 to 10 years and beyond. Our efforts have already resulted in increasing population trends in some parts of the species' range, bolstering the overall growth trend which, for the first time in decades, is increasing.

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Young monk seal underwater at Pearl and Hermes Reef. Credit: April Surgent

Hawaiian monk seal recovery still faces challenges that will take additional resources and commitment to overcome. Reversing decades of precipitous population decline is no easy task, especially factoring in the logistics of working across an expansive and remote archipelago spanning thousands of miles. Biologists must be present in those remote areas to intervene and save seals' lives, as well as to research and monitor the population. The growth of the monk seal population in the main Hawaiian Islands, while encouraging, has also meant increasing numbers of interactions with fisheries and other ocean users. Monk seals have been

intentionally killed, and have fallen victim to infection by a deadly parasite spread through the feces of domestic cats. The deaths of these seals jeopardize recovery and are a clarion call for enhanced local community engagement in the conservation and recovery of this endemic Hawaiian marine mammal. To combat misinformation and misconceptions, we are actively engaging local stakeholders and working with communities to build capacity, ownership, knowledge, and trust. Through strong partnerships, we can develop effective solutions to the challenges of monk seal recovery.

Key Actions Needed 2021-2025

NOAA Fisheries is currently undertaking a host of activities to promote recovery of the species. The key actions that follow are priority actions NOAA Fisheries and partners can take in the next 5 years that would benefit the most from collaboration. They represent a small subset of the recovery actions identified in the August 2007 Revised Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Monk Seal and the January 2016 Main Hawaiian Islands

Monk Seal Management Plan. The partners identified below currently collaborate with us in some way or have indicated their interest in helping achieve the action, but may not be currently committed to a specific activity or commitment of resources. This list is not comprehensive of all potential partners, and we welcome partnering with others not identified within this plan.

Improve Survival of Juvenile and Adult Female Seals in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

Description and Background: NOAA's on-the-ground research and conservation activities in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, including responding to changes in habitat quality, are critical to the recovery of the Hawaiian monk seal, and provide a foundation for our recovery program efforts and those of our partners. These tools include the following actions, amongst others:

- Perform activities that improve seal survival, such as translocating juvenile seals, mitigating aggression towards females and pups by male monk seals, and removing terrestrial and marine debris in partnership with local NGOs.

- Rehabilitate young seals at The Marine Mammal Center's state-of-the-art monk seal hospital in Kailua-Kona, Ke Kai Ola.
- Address the primary threats facing monk seals at French Frigate Shoals, which currently hosts approximately 20 percent of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands population, including habitat loss due to climate change and entrapment in deteriorating infrastructure.

To continue these successful and impactful activities we must maintain Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Assessment and Recovery Camps. By being present for sufficient amounts of time, we maximize the number of seals benefiting from interventions and ensure robust data collection for planning, implementing, and



A monk seal snoozes as NOAA ship Oscar Elton Sette departs Pearl and Hermes Atoll after dropping off a field team that will spend several months monitoring the seals, performing life-saving interventions, and removing marine debris.

Credit: Mark Sullivan, NOAA Fisheries

assessing recovery activities. Continued and strategic investment in these recovery actions will have the largest impact on stabilizing the species.

Expected Benefits to the Species: In the short term, this action will directly save the lives of young monk seals (particularly juvenile females) and increase the number of reproductive females in the population. In the medium term, we stabilize age/sex structures of each population, which have suffered from decades of poor juvenile survival. In the long term, this stability and increased reproductive potential further slows and potentially reverses the population decline within a decade, and preserves important habitat for breeding and access to important foraging areas.

Source:

Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Monk Seal (NMFS 2007)

Recovery Strategy Key Action #1: Improve survivorship of females of all ages, particularly juveniles and yearlings, in the sub-populations of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Recovery Strategy Key Action #2: Maintain the extensive field presence during the breeding season in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Field presence is critical not just to the monitoring and research efforts, but also to carry out the active management and conservation of Hawaiian monk seal sub-population in these areas.

- Recovery Action 1: Investigate and mitigate factors affecting food limitation (see 1.7, 1.8)
- Recovery Action 2: Prevent entanglement of monk seals (see 2.1)
- Recovery Action 3: Prevent introduction and spread of infectious disease (see 3.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, 3.3)
- Recovery Action 5: Conserve Hawaiian monk seal habitat (see 5.3, 5.3.1, 5.4, 5.4.3,
- Recovery Action 7: Reduce male aggression toward pups/immature seals and adult females (see 7.1.2, 7.2, 7.3)
- Recovery Action 12: Continue population monitoring and research (see 12.1, 12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.2.5, 12.2.7, 12.3.2)
- Recovery Action 14: Implement the Recovery Program for the Hawaiian monk seal (see 14.3, 14.4)

Location: Northwestern Hawaiian Islands/
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

Partners: NOAA Marine Debris Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Ocean Service, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), State of Hawaii Office of Hawaiian Affairs, The Marine Mammal Center/Ke Kai Ola, Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii, Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Program, U.S. Coast Guard.

Current Status: Ongoing; our activities in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands were hindered substantially due to the pandemic in 2020 and may continue to be hindered into the future, making future years of effort increasingly important to our long-term data, monitoring, and recovery activities.

Resources: The costs of camp and supplies to maintain existing capacity and continue to implement recovery activities are \$700,000/year (including the underlying research program, existing staff time, and overhead costs) assuming NOAA fleet ship time is provided at a minimum of 23 days twice a year, for 46 days/year. In 2021, a charter vessel contract has become essential because of other fleet priorities and schedules, with an estimated cost of \$1.25 to 1.75 million. Future costs to maintain this capacity independently may therefore range from \$700,000/year to nearly \$2 million/year, depending on the type of vessel support available. While some of these costs are intrinsic to NOAA's efforts, partnerships can certainly help offset portions of field costs. Some examples include sharing charter costs across external federal, state, or private partners;

developing complementary charter missions for habitat-focused efforts at French Frigate Shoals, marine debris removal, or seal rehabilitation activities; or allocating dedicated time to monk seal research and recovery as part of existing conservation priorities, such as DLNR and USFWS efforts at Kure and Midway Atolls, respectively.

To continue these successful and impactful activities we must maintain Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Assessment and Recovery Camps.

Mitigate Human-Seal Interactions to Ensure Natural Population Growth and Minimize Conflict

Description and Background: In the past three to four decades, monk seals have successfully reestablished a population in the main Hawaiian Islands. This small (approximately 300 individuals) but relatively healthy population was growing steadily for many years, even in the face of overall population decline, and has played an extremely important role in beginning to reverse the species' decline and prevent extinction. However, a growing number of seals around Hawaii's human population has led to challenges with human-seal interactions, and the monk seal population growth is not what it once was. These challenges include human safety concerns from overly friendly seals, harassment of seals by the public, fishery interactions that lead to injured seals and frustrated fishermen, and even intentional seal killings. A recent study identified three main threats to main Hawaiian Islands seals that, if mitigated, would allow population growth to flourish to its greatest extent. Two of these threats relate to human-seal interactions: anthropogenic trauma (primarily intentional killings), and fisheries interactions, particularly drowning in fishing nets (Harting et al. 2020). The third main threat, protozoal disease, is addressed under a separate action in this plan.

To achieve the goal of human-seal coexistence, we need to work with partners to continue to implement and improve strategies for managing seal haul-outs on

public beaches, encourage the public to take actions that minimize health and safety risks when in the presence of seals, address instances of seals actively seeking out human interaction, understand and mitigate fishery interactions, and instill respect and appreciation of monk seals as an important native species in order to prevent the intentional killing of seals. This work will require coordination and collaboration with researchers, managers, and other partners on a number of efforts including:

- Reducing harmful human-seal interactions via strategic stakeholder outreach, such as targeted messaging campaigns or public service announcements, developed using social marketing principles and emphasizing coexistence and the mutual benefits of avoided interactions.
- Vigilant monitoring of monk seal-fisheries interactions, and exploring new creative strategies that reduce monk seal injury and mortality, protect fishermen's catch and gear, and maintain sustainable fisheries by mitigating interactions.
- Responding to and resolving issues with seals of concern, including all stranding response and medical interventions as well as dealing with seals exhibiting behaviors that might be placing themselves or people at risk.



A fisherman casts near two monk seals resting on rocks along Kauai's south shore. Credit: Mimi Olry, DLNR

- Supporting DLNR's efforts to reduce monk seal interactions with state-managed fisheries, including development of a conservation plan pursuant to ESA Section 10(a)(1)(b).

Expected Benefits to the Species: While monk seals face many threats, mitigating the impact of harmful human-seal interactions will allow for the continued growth and existence of this population. We believe we can increase our chances of successfully attaining and sustaining the main Hawaiian Islands recovery goal of 500 seals by developing creative management tools and proactively working with the community to find a balanced management strategy that protects seals while being flexible for community needs. By implementing these actions we can maintain, and hopefully enhance, the recovery momentum that currently exists in the main Hawaiian Islands.

Source:

Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Monk Seal

Recovery Strategy Key Action #3: Ensure the continued natural growth of the Hawaiian monk seal in the main Hawaiian Islands by reducing threats, including interactions with recreational fisheries, disturbance of mother-pup pairs, disturbance of hauled-out seals, and exposure to human and domestic animal diseases. This should be accomplished with coordination of all federal, state, local, and non-governmental parties, volunteer networks, and increased outreach and education in order to develop a culture of coexistence between humans and seals in the main Hawaiian Islands.

- Recovery Action 1.5: Investigate competition with other top predators and commercial and recreational fisheries in the main Hawaiian Islands
- Recovery Action 5.4.1: Strengthen cooperative efforts with agencies and organizations
- Recovery Action 6: Reduce Hawaiian monk seal interactions with fisheries (see all sub-actions)
- Recovery Action 8: Reduce the likelihood and impact of human disturbance (see 8.1, 8.4)
- Recovery Action 13: Create a Main Hawaiian Islands Hawaiian Monk Seal Management Plan (see 13.3, 13.5, 13.6)
- Recovery Action 14: Implement the Recovery Program for the Hawaiian monk seal (see 14.2, 14.3)

Through partnerships, there is currently greater capacity than ever to attend to haul-outs and engage with ocean users in the main Hawaiian Islands.

Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan

- Strategy: FISHERY PARTNERSHIPS – Reduce harmful monk seal-fishery interactions through engagement, outreach, and prevention
- Strategy: RESPONSE – Prevent and effectively respond to seals of concern
- Strategy: ENGAGEMENT – Engage communities and build productive relationships

Location: Main Hawaiian Islands

Partners: NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, DLNR, DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement, DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, Hawaii Marine Animal Response, The Marine Mammal Center/Ke Kai Ola, Hawaii Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition, and many other non-profit organizations and community groups.

Current Status: Ongoing. Through partnerships, there is currently greater capacity than ever to attend to

haul-outs and engage with ocean users in the main Hawaiian Islands. We continue to work together to try to expand that capacity, and to work within established as well as newly forming community-based systems for natural resource management. We also continue to explore new technology to prevent human-seal interactions as it becomes available, such as acoustic deterrents and behavior modification tools. The Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan, published in January 2016, identifies many of the fine-scale activities and partnership opportunities needed to complete this action.

Resources: Annual spending ranges from \$1 to 1.3 million per year. We anticipate comparable spending over the next 5 years to cover full and partial salaries

for multiple staff for response, research activities and gear, veterinary support, travel, equipment and supplies costs, and grant funds to support public outreach and haul-out and stranding response efforts. This amount does not include funding given by NOAA Fisheries to the Hawaii DLNR via an ESA Section 6 grant to address threats such as fishery interactions. Additional funds to expand veterinary capacity would significantly increase our ability to address seal illness and injury throughout the state.

Address Diseases with Population Level Impacts

Description and Background: Population health monitoring is fundamental to prevention, early detection, and mitigation of disease threats to Hawaiian monk seals. Over the past decade, most notably in the past 5 years, the threat of a potential morbillivirus outbreak has been mitigated through a groundbreaking program to vaccinate Hawaiian monk seals. Now that this program is in a full implementation phase, continued vaccination of pups born into the population is essential in order to strengthen and maintain herd immunity throughout the species' vast geographic range.

Some emerging health threats are less directly mitigated, and require greater community engagement and internal and external collaboration to address. For example, in 2015 population health surveillance efforts allowed us to identify toxoplasmosis (caused by the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*) as an increasingly concerning threat to monk seals. It is now the leading disease-related risk to monk seal survival, specifically in the main Hawaiian Islands, and one of the top three overall threats affecting growth of that population (Harting et al. 2020). Mitigating the threat of toxoplasmosis presents many challenges. The source of infection is land-to-sea flow of the parasite via cat feces, and NOAA has limited regulatory authority to manage cats or the terrestrial landscapes they inhabit. Affected seals have

never been successfully rehabilitated, and there are no suitable vaccines available. Management and control of cats is often met with opposition from some segments of the public. Therefore, this disease threat requires substantial partnerships and resources to address and is an area of great focus.

The backbone of all this work requires us to sustain population health monitoring through timely and comprehensive testing of all samples collected, so that we are able to detect new threats and prioritize our efforts on those with population level significance. When paired with outbreak response readiness, we will continue to advance our capacity to prevent devastating disease outbreaks in this species through the following actions:

- Maintain and advance preparedness for disease outbreaks, including vaccinating pups for morbillivirus.
- Maintain rangewide population health surveillance, with a focus on toxoplasmosis.
- Develop, implement, and support strategic actions to reduce the threat of toxoplasmosis to monk seals.
- Develop capacity for treating monk seals with toxoplasmosis.



A NOAA staff member vaccinates a seal against morbillivirus.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries

Expected Benefits to the Species: For some infectious disease threats, the risk of entry into the population may be relatively low. However, once introduced, new pathogens could spread quickly and compromise the species' existence, despite all other enhancement measures. Continued surveillance and vaccination activities will prevent a catastrophic outbreak that could undo decades of recovery work and push monk seals into extinction. Other pathogens, like *T. gondii*, are already present and ubiquitous, and with effective partnerships and sufficient resources, their population impacts can be curtailed.

Source:

Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Monk Seal

Recovery Strategy Key Action #3: Ensure the continued natural growth of the Hawaiian monk seal in the main Hawaiian Islands by reducing threats, including ... exposure to human and domestic animal diseases.

Recovery Strategy Key Action #4: Reduce the probability of the introduction of infectious diseases into the Hawaiian monk seal population.

- Recovery Action 4: Prevent introduction and spread of infectious disease (see 11 sub-actions)

Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan

- Strategy: HEALTH – Reduce infectious disease risk and disease-related mortality
 - Objective HEA-1: Evaluate and reduce risk of exposure and transmission of disease to monk seals
 - Objective HEA-2: Detect early incidences of disease in monk seal population
 - Objective HEA-3: Be prepared with strategies to treat affected animals and prevent disease spread

Location: Main Hawaiian Islands

Partners: Toxoplasmosis is a global issue affecting many marine and terrestrial species, and the nature of the threat requires a multipronged approach to

mitigation including policy, management and control, education and outreach, and research. Given this, we currently and hope to continue to partner with a broad range of entities both nationally and internationally, that are too numerous to enumerate here. Partners include federal, state, and local government agencies; non-governmental and nonprofit organizations; academic institutions; natural resource managers; domestic animal welfare organizations; private companies; and policymakers.

Current Status: Ongoing. The morbillivirus vaccination program is established, with new pups vaccinated as soon as possible after they wean to maintain herd immunity. We are engaged in several multi-stakeholder partnerships attempting to address the issue of toxoplasmosis, including an interagency working group we co-founded focused on impacts of cats on wildlife and human health, and multiple informal collaborative efforts with animal welfare groups seeking common ground upon which to base outreach and management efforts targeted at keeping cats (and therefore their feces) safely contained and off the landscape. We are also currently engaged in a collaborative modeling effort looking at landscape-level risk factors in order to better understand the distribution and dynamics of *T. gondii* on the landscape and inform strategic management actions.

Resources: Annual expected costs of vaccines and supplies: \$13,000 to \$18,000. The Species in the Spotlight initiative has provided much-needed support for disease screening efforts, and for multi-stakeholder workshops convened to identify and prioritize toxoplasmosis research and management actions.

Continued surveillance and vaccination activities will prevent a catastrophic outbreak that could undo decades of recovery work and push monk seals into extinction.

Action: Foster Community Support for Monk Seal Recovery

Description and Background: Due to the expansive area in the main Hawaiian Islands, we are dependent on reports from concerned citizens to monitor the main Hawaiian Islands seal population, locate sick or injured animals, and track human-seal interactions. This puts citizens at the forefront of monk seal science and disease surveillance and makes them a critical piece of our collective recovery efforts. While public reporting is extremely important, broader community participation and support is critical to ensuring the successful recovery of monk seals.

Quality engagement and tailored communication promote sustainable human behavior change in ways that are meaningful for different target audiences, and help cultivate a culture of coexistence around monk seals. Relationships built on authentic, reciprocal dialogue with communities serve as a foundation to address seal management challenges while also meeting community needs. Inadequate understanding of federal policies and management actions, and a perceived or actual lack of input, can damage or prevent these relationships. We must aim to resolve conflicts with or misunderstandings about monk seals in a manner that positively affects the way people behave around seals in the wild, reduces human-seal conflict, and brings about lasting generational change.

Approaches to working with the community to cultivate a culture of coexistence should be based on the latest social science and include:

- Developing citizen science projects that engage Hawaii's communities in monk seal conservation and encourage a broader cross section of the public to become involved in monk seal recovery.
- Working with stakeholders to create and disseminate social marketing campaigns that address key threats to monk seal recovery and promote human-seal coexistence.
- Encouraging and supporting community groups and members who are engaged in or are interested in launching their own outreach, education, and coastal



A volunteer with Hawaii Marine Animal Response (HMAR) shares information with visitors at a monk seal haul-out on the island of Oahu. Credit: HMAR

stewardship efforts, benefiting both priority monk seal recovery issues and ocean-based activities and livelihoods.

- Building up the next generation of monk seal researchers, managers, volunteers, and stewards by providing opportunities for experiential learning and by working with communities and schools in such a way that they can see themselves as integral components of NOAA and its future.

Expected Benefits to the Species:

Coexistence between increasing seal and human populations in the main Hawaiian Islands is a priority for species recovery. Communication that encourages community engagement, dispels misconceptions, and builds awareness of and appreciation for the monk seal as an important part of Hawaii's natural heritage will be essential in creating an environment in which humans and monk seals share Hawaii's beaches and coastal waters with minimal conflict and maximum benefit.

Coexistence between increasing seal and human populations in the main Hawaiian Islands is a priority for species recovery.

Broad inclusion of communities and enhanced engagement from the non-government sector in monk seal conservation will ultimately help create a sustainable culture of coexistence and respectful human behavior around monk seals on the beach and in the water, reducing disturbance and other human interactions.

Source:

Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Monk Seal

- Recovery Action 5: Conserve Hawaiian monk seal habitat (see 5.4.1)
- Recovery Action 8: Reduce the likelihood and impact of human disturbance (see 8.1, 8.4)
- Recovery Action 13: Create a Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan (see 13.3, 13.4, 13.5)
- Recovery Action 14: Implement the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Program (see 14.2)

Main Hawaiian Islands Management Plan

- Strategy: FISHERY PARTNERSHIPS – Reduce monk seal-fishery impacts through engagement, outreach, and prevention
- Strategy: RESPONSE – Prevent and effectively respond to seals of concern
- Strategy: ENGAGEMENT – Engage communities and build productive relationships

- Strategy: EDUCATION – Increase effective outreach and education
- Strategy: CAPACITY – Build program capacity

Location: Main Hawaiian Islands

Partners: DLNR, USFWS, National Ocean Service—Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Hawaii Marine Animal Response, The Marine Mammal Center/Ke Kai Ola, Waikiki Aquarium, Hawaiian Monk Seal Preservation Ohana, Na Kama Kai, Malama Pupukea-Waimea, Malama Learning Center, and many other non-profit organizations and community groups.

Current Status: Ongoing under the guidance of the Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan.

Resources:

Funding: Spending on community response support and education grants in FY 2019 and 2020 was about \$300,000/year. An expanded program seeking additional partners to support strategic communications and social marketing efforts expected to have state-wide benefits will cost \$400,000/year.

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