



Pacific Islands Region

Media Availability

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 5, 2008

UPDATE ON MONK SEAL PUP ABANDONED ON KAUAI

Pup Brought Into Captive Care Rehabilitation

On Friday NOAA Fisheries brought an endangered monk seal pup into captive care rehabilitation after it was abandoned by its mother. Attempts to reintroduce the pup to the mother were unsuccessful as the female exhibited aggressive behavior toward the pup. This female is the same one that abandoned a pup last year at about this time in the same location. The recovery team determined that the pup, if left alone, would have no chance of survival and made arrangements to transport it to Oahu for captive care rehabilitation. As they have done in the past, the U.S. Coast Guard provided transportation for the animal from Kauai to Oahu on a C-130.

NOAA Fisheries has assembled a team of experts and is relying on assistance from the Marine Mammal Center, a world leader in marine mammal care and rehabilitation with lots of experience with harbor seal neonates. The Marine Mammal Center also partnered with NOAA Fisheries on the successful rehabilitation in the captive care of monk seal twins two years ago.

“We’ve never dealt with a seal this young before and are guardedly optimistic because dealing with a neonate (newborn) is tricky business. The animal will be stressed and susceptible to disease so strict quarantine measures will be observed,” said Dr. Charles Littnan, NOAA Fisheries Leader of the Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Program.

NOAA Fisheries thanks the media for their patience as our experts were busy tending to the needs of the pup in these critical first few days. Our researchers and experts will be available to answer questions about the pup this morning.

WHAT: Opportunity to speak with experts on the condition of the abandoned monk seal pup now in captive care rehabilitation

WHEN: Monday, May 5, 2008 at 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Kewalo Beach Park near the sea wall **outside** of the NOAA Kewalo Facility
Please park in the beach parking lot

WHO: Dr. Charles Littnan, NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
Tenaya Norris, The Marine Mammal Center
David Schofield, NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Regional Office

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