



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, December 5, 2014

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### **THE GARDEN ISLAND NEWSPAPER PUTS UP \$10,000 REWARD FOR KILLER OF MONK SEAL PUP ON KAUAI**

#### ***Matches \$10,000 Reward by U.S. Humane Society and Other Groups***

**LIHUE** — The Garden Island newspaper is putting up a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of whoever is responsible for the bludgeoning death of a female Hawaiian monk seal pup in Anahola, on Kauai's northeast coast.

The award matches a \$10,000 award offered by the Humane Society of the United States, Conservation Council of Hawaii, Center for Biological Diversity and the Monk Seal Foundation.

"This is the fifth illegal killing of critically endangered monk seals in Hawaii since 2011," said Bill Buley, TGI editor in chief. "We must put an end to this senseless slaughter of Hawaiian monk seals. We hope this reward will convince someone to step forward with information that will lead to the person or persons responsible for this heinous act."

(more)

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The young female monk seal, tagged RF58, was found dead from blunt force trauma on the beach near Anahola on Nov. 30. She was born June 28 and seemed perfectly healthy and behaving normally when seen near her birthplace, Waipake Beach, less than 24 hours before she was found dead.

According to a preliminary post-mortem report from the Marine Mammal Center and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the seal likely did not die immediately, but from complications associated with massive trauma and internal bleeding.

"Like all Hawaiian monk seals, RF58 was a vital and integral part of our native Hawaiian ecosystem," said William J. Aila, Jr., chair of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). "Killing a healthy young female seal in the wild is senseless and only makes things worse for our local ocean resources and the people who depend on them."

Dennis Francis, president of Oahu Publications, Inc., which publishes The Garden Island newspaper, said the only way for whoever committed this tragic act to be brought to justice is if the community works together to find the perpetrators.

"We applaud The Garden Island's community spirit in posting this reward," Francis said.

"This killing of a protected monk seal pup and the ones preceding it are abhorrent and go against everything that these Islands stand for. Someone knows who did this, and the rewards posted by The Garden Island and other concerned community and environmental groups hopefully will lead to an arrest and conviction."

Under Hawaii law, it is a Class C felony to kill a monk seal, punishable by fines of up to \$50,000 and five years in prison. It also is a federal crime to kill or harm a Hawaiian monk seal and convictions can result in additional fines and jail time.

Other than this latest monk seal death on Kauai, there have been four other suspicious deaths of monk seals since 2011 – two on Kauai and two on Molokai. There also are rewards offered for the arrests and convictions of those responsible for those deaths.

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Anyone having information related to the female monk seal death on Kauai — or any of the other monk seal fatalities — should call the NOAA OLE hotline at 1-800-853-1964 or the DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement at 1-800-DLNR-TIP or 643-DLNR. All information will be held in confidence.

*The Garden Island, first published in 1902, is Kauai's only daily newspaper. It now publishes seven days a week and is known for editorial excellence in delivering local, state, national and world news. Eighty-seven percent of Kauai adults read The Garden Island, which is owned by Oahu Publications, Inc., whose portfolio also includes the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, MidWeek, MidWeek Kauai, the Hawaii Tribune Herald, West Hawaii Today, the Hawaii Army Weekly, Hawaii Marine, Ho'okele, HILuxury, and a growing roster of community periodicals and in-room resort magazines.*

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