

Kauai man is charged in green sea turtle's death

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A 32-year-old Kekaha, Kauai, man has been charged after he allegedly killed a green sea turtle on the island.

Bronson Nakaahiki was charged Wednesday with harassing or causing harm to a threatened or endangered wildlife species.

He was released pending his initial court appearance, which has yet to be scheduled, according to spokesman Dan Dennison of the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Dennison said witnesses called 911 after they allegedly saw Nakaahiki slice the throat of a green sea turtle — estimated to be at least 100 pounds — and harvest meat from it at Kekaha Beach sometime before 3 p.m. Wednesday.

Kauai police reported the killing to the Division of Conservation Enforcement and Resources. Enforcement officers responded and placed Nakaahiki under arrest.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Bronson Nakaahiki

Fisheries Service Pacific Islands Regional Office, a majority of Hawaii's green sea turtles feed in coastal areas of the main Hawaiian Islands and nest in the French Frigate Shoals of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

In 2017 a Kauai man was sent to prison for harassing another protected species, an endangered Hawaiian monk seal. Shylo Akuna of Eleele was sentenced to four years in prison after he was convicted of harassing a pregnant 17-year-old seal at Salt Pond Beach. It was believed to be the first conviction in the state under a 2010 law that made it a Class C felony to harm or harass endangered Hawaiian monk seals.

THE GREEN sea turtle killing was the second in Hawaii within the past week.

On Saturday a 250-pound turtle was discovered dead at Onekahakaha County Beach Park in South Hilo. Witnesses spotted it floating belly up with its two front flippers amputated. No arrests had been made as of Thursday in that incident.

"We find these actions disturbing and despicable," Dennison said of the recent acts against honu in Hawaii.

Green sea turtles are threatened species. In the 1970s the population plummeted because of humans harvesting turtles and their eggs. Since the federal government listed Hawaii's green sea turtles as a threatened species in 1978, the population has steadily increased.

ACCORDING TO the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine

The seal identified as RK30 was uninjured and gave birth to her seventh pup on a Na Pali Coast beach.

NAKAAHIKI HAS a criminal record of abuse of a family or household member. Family Court Judge Trudy Senda in 2013 sentenced him to 30 days in jail with credit for time served and two years of probation after he was convicted of abuse, according to online court records. A year later he was sentenced to six months in jail after he violated terms of his probation.

Anyone with information on the turtle killing in South Hilo is urged to call DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement at 643-DLNR (3567).