

NOAA investigating death of monk seal pup

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A 2-month-old, female Hawaiian monk seal pup was recently found dead on Oahu's North Shore, according to wildlife officials, with the circumstances surrounding her death indicating it was not of natural causes.

The seal, RL44, also known as Nanea, was discovered dead on the morning of Sept. 24. The case has been referred to the National Oceanic

and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Law Enforcement for investigation.

RL44 was born on July 19 at Paradise Cove at Ko Olina. NOAA Fisheries and volunteers from Hawaii Marine Animal Response monitored her during her 6-week nursing period. After she weaned, NOAA decided to relocate her to a remote area on the North Shore, where she would have the opportunity to interact with other young, wild monk

seals, and be less likely to be disturbed by humans.

The same was done in 2017 for the pup, Kaimana, who was born at Kaimana Beach Park in Waikiki.

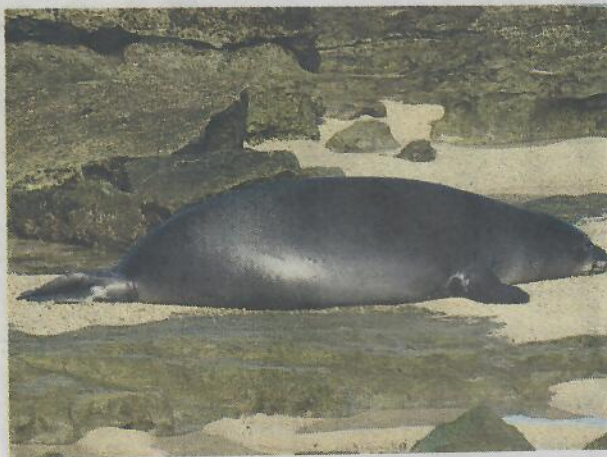
"Management decisions like translocating a seal are carefully weighed in a series of in-depth risk assessments," said NOAA Fisheries in a blog post. "All decisions are ultimately made with seal and human safety as the primary concern."

The state Division of

Aquatic Resources performed a sweep of the area where RL44 would be translocated, removing line, nets, hooks and other debris to reduce the threat of entanglement. The translocation went smoothly, according to officials. Animal response volunteers observed RL44 socializing and playing with other seals in the area.

Anyone with information about RL44 should call NOAA Law Enforcement at 800-853-1964.

LOCAL



COURTESY HAWAII MARINE ANIMAL RESPONSE

Hawaiian monk seal RL44, known by many as Nanea, rests on the beach at Paradise Cove.