

Man charged in seal attack on Kauai pleads not guilty

By Rosemarie Bernardo
rbernardo@staradvertiser.com

A 19-year-old Eleele man charged with harassing a pregnant Hawaiian monk seal at a beach on Kauai pleaded not guilty Monday before Judge Joe Moss in District Court.

Shylo K. Akuna has been charged with harm or harassment of a monk seal, disorderly conduct and violation of county park rules. His preliminary hearing is set for Wednesday. Akuna is being held in lieu of \$20,000 bail.

A video posted on social media showed a man repeatedly punching at the 17-year-old monk seal identified as RK30 at Salt Pond Beach at about 6 p.m. April 26. The seal is pregnant with her seventh pup, officials said. Several eyewitnesses identified Akuna as the man in the video.

Among those who viewed the video was an off-duty conservation enforcement officer on Kauai, who informed his supervisor of the incident.



COURTESY DLNR

Shylo K. Akuna:

The Eleele man was charged Monday with the April 26 attack on a pregnant monk seal at Salt Pond Beach

According to a court document, witnesses observed Akuna approach the seal while it was sleeping on the sand. He threw sand and yelled at the seal. The seal responded by "barking" and attempting to bite Akuna. He allegedly chased RK30 into the water and started, "swinging his fists at the seal."

Witnesses yelled at Akuna to stop. After Akuna got out of the water and left the

beach, witnesses said, RK30 slowly returned to the sand.

Officials said Akuna was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident.

Kauai police and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration later responded to the scene on the island's south shore. Biologists observed the seal resting on the west side of the beach with no apparent injuries from the harassment. RK30 has suffered previous injuries, and has scars from a shark attack and entanglement in fishing line, and cuts from a boat propeller.

Kauai police in tandem with the state Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement and NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement arrested Akuna near Eleele on Thursday afternoon.

The "take" of a monk seal, official language meaning harm or harassment, is a felony. Akuna faces penalties of up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$50,000 if convicted of the offense.

Dive into new play area

By Nancy Arcayna
narcayna@staradvertiser.com

Youngsters can catch a wave on the back of a honu, slide down a waterfall or explore a coral reef — without getting wet — at Windward Mall's new ocean-themed play area, relocated to the lower-level Macy's wing, near Big City Diner.

Hawaii's Sea Treasures, a colorful indoor playground that opens Friday, provides a comfortable space for families with young children to take a

break from shopping. There are shoe cubbies, a stroller parking area and comfortable bench seating along all sides.

The new area is sponsored by HMSA, and the mall plans to host health-related events in the area, according to Kelly O'Sullivan, the mall's retail marketing manager.

The seven play structures, constructed from fiberglass and covered

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HSA
5/3/2016



PACIFIC TSUNAMI MUSEUM / JAMES KERSHNER COLLECTION

1946

Above, waves bear down on the already scoured Hilo waterfront during the April 1, 1946, tsunami. Below, the Kuwahara Store looks mostly intact amid the wreckage of Hilo's business district. Some buildings, lifted off their foundations, are at odd angles.

4/1/16 HS-A



Playtime Production Manager Jason Julian buffs one of the features at the Windward Mall's new play area.

A SPACE TO PLAY
Old play area:
 25-by-40 feet = 1,000 sq ft.
New play area:
 19-by-58-feet = 1,102 sq ft.

DENNIS ODA / DODA@STARADVERTISER.COM

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