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Pacific Islands
Regional Office

Hawaiian Monk Seal Puppings at Kaimana Beach

MACZAC
July 2023
Kilali Gibson

Agenda

1. Background on Monk Seals
2. Pupping Information
3. History of Kaimana Beach Puppings
4. Challenges and Solutions for 2023 Kaimana Beach Operation
5. Recommendations



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Background information on Monk Seals



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‘ilio holo kai

“dog that runs in the sea”

Endemic to Hawaii



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Population Status

- Population growth of about 2% per year since 2013
- Currently over 1,600 Hawaiian Monk Seals
- 2/3 population in Papahānaumokuākea

O'ahu

- About 70 Hawaiian Monk Seals
- Had 7 pups this year, sadly one passed away



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Pupping Information



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Nursing Period



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Monk Seal Behavior

- Monk seals are generally not aggressive
- Nursing moms are protective, especially in the water



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Weaning

- Abrupt weaning
- Pups 5-7 weeks old
- Weigh 125 -175+ lbs
- Molted to silvery/grey
- Blubber layer sustains pup while it learns to forage



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History of Kaimana Beach Puppings



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4 Puppings at Kaimana Beach



Mom RH58 'Rocky'

- 2017 – RJ58 'Kaimana'
- 2022 – RQ58 'Koalani'



Mom RK96 'Kaiwi'

- 2021 – RP96 'Lōli'i'
- 2023 – RS36 'Pualani'



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Challenges and Solutions for 2023 Kaimana Beach Operations



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Challenges



- **Human Safety in water**
- **Mom and pup needing space on land**
- **Logistics of managing and moving the perimeter**
- **Addressing diverse community needs**
- **Mixed reactions from beach goers for the operation**

2023 Solutions: Team Assemblage



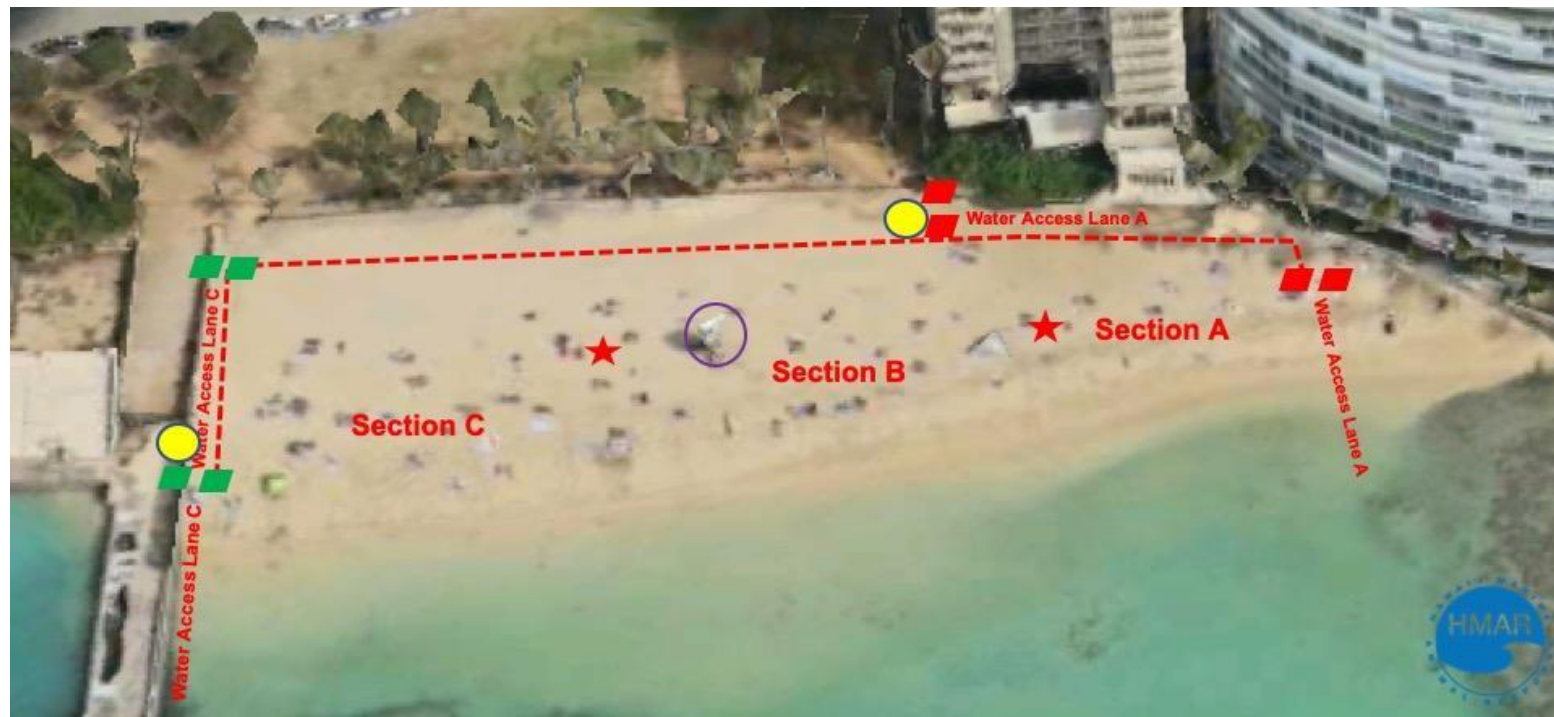
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2023 Solutions: Communications



- **Joint Agency Press Conference**
- **Joint Press Releases**
- **Many various types of media output regularly put out (videos, blogs, fb posts, etc)**
- **New signage and messaging**

2023 Solutions: On site Perimeter



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2023 Solutions: Flag System



Feedback and Debrief

- **Mainly neutral or positive feedback from community**
- **Partners agreed the team approach was most effective**
- **Partners agreed the set up of the perimeter and our collective management was good**
- **One change: adding an additional water access lane in the middle when more seals are present**



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Recommendations



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Recommendations for Next Year

- **Maintain partnership approach**
- **Maintain early planning**
- **More creative and engaging content for our community**
- **Open to your suggestions too!**



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Mahalo nui loa to our State partners!!!!



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Questions?



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