



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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October 31, 2017

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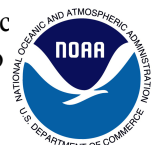
Re: Civil Beat Hawaiian Monk Seal Livestream and News Updates

Dear Anthony and Honolulu Civil Beat Team,

I wanted to write and express my praise and sincere thanks for Civil Beat's coverage of the monk seal pupping event that happened last summer on Kaimana Beach. As you know, the Hawaiian monk seal is an endangered species unique to the islands of Hawaii. With only 1,400 seals remaining each pupping event is the potential for a brighter future for the species and each one offers up a unique set of challenges. But nothing could be as challenging as trying to manage mother seal giving birth to a pup in the heart of Hawaii's tourism industry – Waikiki. It took a vast cast of characters to successfully navigate the six weeks it took from the pup's birth to weaning and required enormous efforts to keep seals and people safe while effectively educating the public.

Honolulu Civil Beat played a vital and unique role in this unprecedented pupping event. Your innovative and collaborative nature helped benefitted monk seals and NOAA in multiple ways. First and foremost, the livestreaming pup cam offered up an opportunity for millions of people around the world to learn about and, for some, fall in love with monk seals. It is without a doubt the most far reaching monk seal outreach tool we have ever witnessed. We received messages from people around the world asking about Kaimana and how they could help support monk seal conservation efforts. The live feed also provided managers an opportunity to monitor the situation on the beach and make decisions how best to manage and respond to the ever-evolving situation.

The additional news coverage you provided, especially the "Pupdates", gave our researchers and managers a rare opportunity to respond directly to the public's questions and concerns in a way that was fun and engaging for all involved. This resulted in more information being shared and increased trust in our Agency and our mission to help monk seals. More importantly, the livestream and regular updates helped us prepare the public for the difficult management decision that was going to be made once the pup was weaned from its mother. The livestream showed the masses of people and numerous threats that Kaimana would face when she was on her own. The pupdates allowed us to slowly prepare the public that decision and inform them on the many factors we must consider when deciding whether or not to



intervene with a young seal. As you know, in the end we deemed moving Kaimana was in her, and the species', best interest. While there will always be critics of any decision that is made, there was far more support for our choice than there would have been without Civil Beat's coverage.

I look forward to working on monk seal and other protected species issues with Civil Beat in the future. It will be difficult to replicate such a perfect situation that allowed the livestreaming of such an incredible natural event. However, I am certain that Civil Beat will continue to help engage the public in Hawaii and around the globe in innovative ways.

Thank you again for your efforts and ingenuity and know that this coverage made a difference in our conservation efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charles Littnan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charles Littnan, Ph.D.
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