

Man indicted in death of Hawaiian monk seal

August 6 2009

(AP) -- A federal grand jury has indicted a 78-year-old Kauai man in the shooting death of an endangered Hawaiian monk seal in May.

The indictment was returned Wednesday against Charles Vidinha, who is charged with violating the Endangered Species Act. If convicted, he faces a maximum one-year imprisonment and a \$50,000 fine.

According to court documents, a dead female monk seal was recovered at Pilaa Beach, a remote beach on Kauai's north shore.

Hawaiian monk seals are among the most endangered marine mammals in the world, with fewer than 1,200 remaining. They are protected under the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act and state wildlife laws.

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