

Notes from David Laist on Monk Seal Foraging Areas

Linda and David: I would be very surprised if some at least a few individual seals from Nihoa and/or Niihau did not use Middle Bank as a foraging area. The best source of data to document its use would be from monk satellite telemetry data. However I don't believe any seals on Niihau have been tagged and only a few seals, have been tagged at Nihoa. A recent report looking a few resident and translocated seals at Nihoa indicates that most stay near Nihoa but there is some movement to neighboring banks (see attached Report). Middle Bank is not named specifically in the this report but the figure on page 100 seems to indicate use of what I believe is Middle Bank by at least one of the few Nihoa seals. PIFSC would be the best source of all tagging results in this area. Perhaps Charles Littnan or Thea Johanos-Kam would be able to provide additional tracking study results for the area. It seems each seal develops its own individual foraging patterns, with some visiting more remote banks, and others staying closer to home.

I also saw the attached report bottomfish DEIS that considered closing Middle Bank as an option to prevent overfishing. From this report, it appears this bank is a very small part of the fishery but is probably a honey hole for two or three Kauai fishermen.

(see https://books.google.com/books?id=HDs3AQAAMAAJ&pg=PR32&lpg=PR32&dq=middle+bank+hawaii+Archipelago+map&source=bl&ots=08IGQ_luSh&sig=qXEJRU3aRHwZiTO6yeSCVwI59UU&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjGqs3RnfvMAhUk7YMKHZMOAJgQ6AEIUDAJ#v=onepage&q&f=false).

Hope this helps.

David