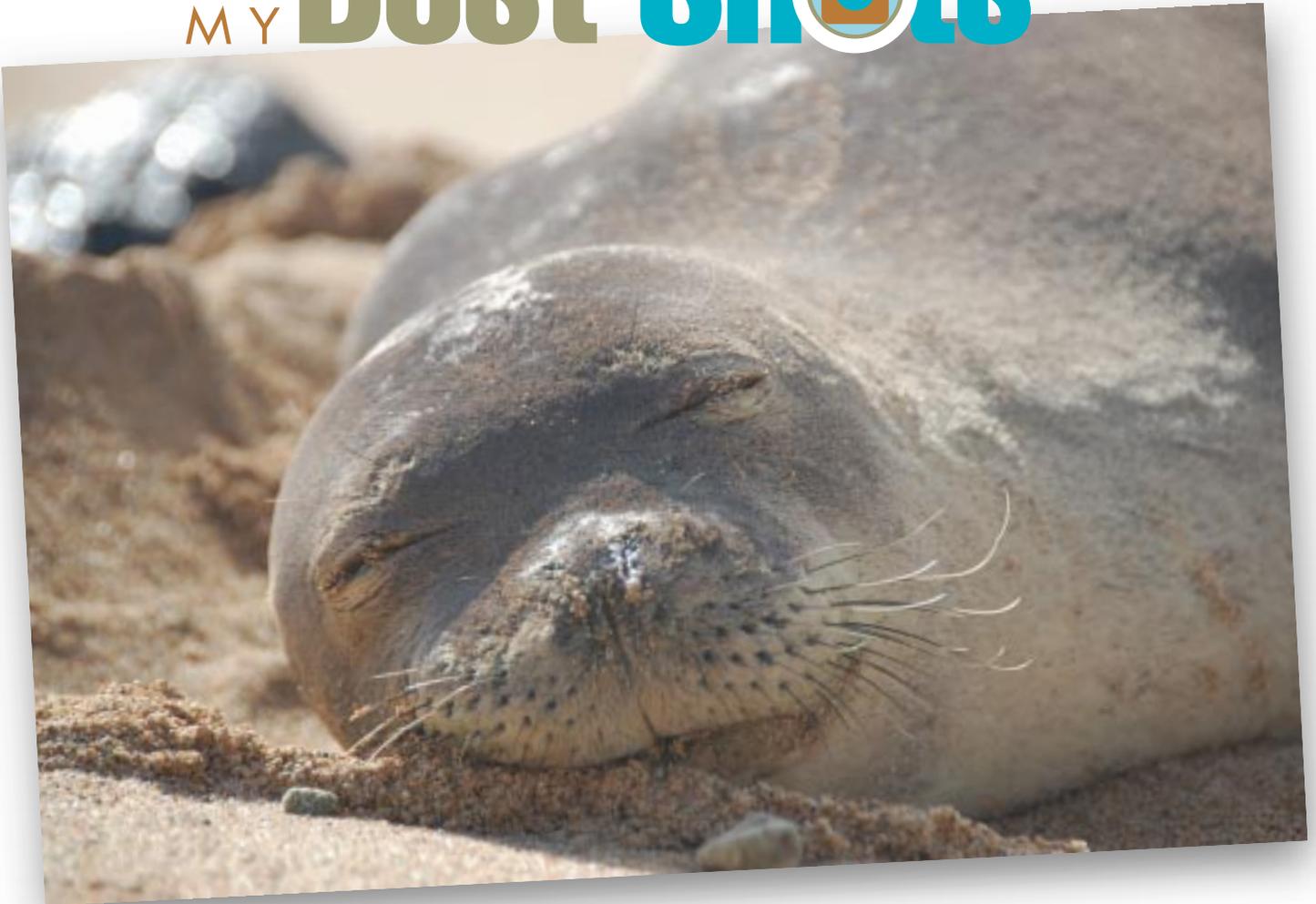


# ONE OF MY Best Shots



**A**fter conducting a field survey for a biological assessment in the mountains of Kauai, I decided to go to the beach to relax. To my great surprise, I saw two adult Hawaiian Monk Seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*), comfortably basking in the sun. One seal was on Poipu beach. The second, pictured here, was about a mile-and-half west on Lawai Beach. When the high tide came, and after resting on the shore for a few hours, the seals woke up and swam back to the ocean.

Hawaiian Monk Seal or 'Ilio-holo-i-ka-uaua, which in the Hawaiian language means "dog that runs in rough water," is an endangered marine mammal. The population is estimated at 1,100 to 1,200 individuals, occurring only in the Hawaiian Islands. A similar monk seal species became extinct in the Caribbean during the first half of the 20th century; a related endangered monk seal species occurs in the Mediterranean Sea. During the 19th century, Hawaiian Monk Seal and other marine

mammals were heavily hunted for oil and pelts. Today, threats including lack of food, infection diseases, entanglements with fishing gear and marine debris, habitat disturbances, and shark attacks contribute to an annual population decline of 4.1 percent.

The Navy is a member and has an active role on the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Team. The Recovery Team was responsible for writing the original draft of the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan Recovery.

These pictures were taken with a Nikon D40, Lens Nikon 18-200 AF-S DX VR.

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