



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

Environmental Center  
Crawford 317 • 2550 Campus Road  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Telephone (808) 948-7361

RL:0901

## HB 3044 HD 1 RELATING TO FISHING

Statement for Senate Committee on  
Energy and Natural Resources  
March 16, 1990

By  
Jacquelin N. Miller, Environmental Center  
William Grannis, Environmental Center  
Richard Brock, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

HB 3044 would lengthen the closed season for the taking of Kona crab and spiny and slipper lobsters and would allow for the sale of these species during the closed season if the animals were caught during the open season.

HD 1 amends HB 3044 to limit the four month closure season to Kona crabs only. Since lobsters spawn all year long, the committee judged that closure for an extra month was not warranted and would place an unnecessary burden on lobster fisheries.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

We concur with HB 3044 HD 1 in regard to a lengthened closed season for Kona crabs. The spawning period for Kona crabs is from May to September. The larger females appear to ovulate two times during a season. The first ovulation is the most productive. Furthermore, a 25 percent increase in body size (carapace length) is associated with a 200 percent increase in the number of eggs produced. Therefore the addition of the month of May to the period when Kona Crabs can not be fished is biologically justified.

In the case of spiny and slipper lobsters there appears to be an undocumented consensus that populations have declined in the main Hawaiian Islands over time. We suggest that current enforcement of the three month closure season be strengthened. In addition, it may be justified to establish a bag limit for recreational fisherman. It is our understanding that bag limits on lobster fishing have been established in California, Florida and Australia. It would be important to establish base line conditions prior to establishment of a bag limit in order to determine the programs potential effectiveness.