

# Saving Hawaiian Monk Seals

Marine animal experts are on a mission. They want to save Hawaiian monk seals from becoming **extinct**. Extinct means "no longer existing."



Alfonso Romero / sxc.hu

*A Monk Seal*

Today, about 1,200 seals live near the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Experts fear that the population will drop in the next five years. "The clock is ticking," says scientist Jen Palmer.

Experts worry that the seals are not getting enough food. Many of the pups are thin and are not living past their first few years. Scientists are trying to figure out why.

Other scientists are monitoring the monk seals' habitat for pollution. A **habitat** is a place in nature where an animal or a plant lives. "Every person takes a very tiny bit of the puzzle, and you hope at some point you...put it all together and it makes a pretty clear picture," says scientist Charles Littnan.