Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries
(Blue Economy and Fisheries Division)

Communiqué – Southern Elephant Seal

1. The Southern Elephant Seal (*Mirounga leonina*) observed in the vicinity of Fort William/Les Salines, Port Louis has been locally named JACKIE and has been identified as a juvenile male.

2. Following reports of JACKIE's presence on Tuesday 04 August 2026, the relevant Action Plan has been activated by the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Blue Economy and Fisheries Division). Since then, officers of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre, the Fisheries Protection Service, the National Coast Guard and the Mauritius Ports Authority have maintained continuous monitoring of the marine mammal.

3. The Southern Elephant Seal is the world's largest seal and one of the largest marine carnivores native to the sub-Antarctic and Antarctic regions, including the Kerguelen Islands. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, the marine mammal is classified as 'vulnerable.'

4. These marine mammals undertake long-distance migrations in search of fish, squid and other marine prey and may periodically come ashore to **breed, moult and rest**. Based on observations so far, JACKIE does not appear to be stranded. The animal is not sick or injured, and is displaying normal behaviour by alternating between resting on shore and returning to the sea.

5. JACKIE requires adequate space and should **not** be disturbed. Members of the public are accordingly advised **not** to approach the marine mammal, attempt to feed it, or force it back to the sea. Any such action may cause stress or injury to the animal. There are also inherent risks of being bitten by the marine mammal which could cause serious infections.

6. Section 33(3)(b) of the Fisheries Act 2023 provides that *"No person shall take, harass, intentionally feed or intentionally kill a marine mammal on shore or at sea."* **Any person convicted of an offence under the Act may be liable to a fine of up to Rs25 million and imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.**

7. The Ministry urges members of the public to act responsibly and to refrain from approaching the marine mammal, to ensure its safety and well-being.

8. JACKIE will be allowed to remain on shore as long as it is resting and moulting, and until it returns to the off-lagoon. The Ministry will continue to closely monitor the situation in collaboration with the relevant authorities and experts.

11 August 2026