

# Fishermen want humpback whales off endangered list

May 3 2013, by Audrey Mcavoy

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In this Jan. 23, 2005 file picture, a humpback whale leaps out of the water in the channel off the town of Lahaina on the island of Maui in Hawaii. Hundreds of Hawaii fishermen are asking the federal government to take North Pacific humpback whales off the endangered species list in recognition of the rebound the population has experienced since the international community banned commercial whaling decades ago. (AP Photo/Reed Saxon)

(AP)—A group of Hawaii fishermen is asking the federal government to take northern Pacific humpback whales off the endangered species list.

Hawaii Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition Inc. filed a

petition to the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) last month.

It says humpback whale numbers have grown more than 10 times in the northern Pacific since the international community banned commercial whaling in 1966.

The North Pacific has more than 21,000 [humpback whales](#) today, compared with about 1,400 in the mid-1960s. But environmentalists say ship strikes and fishing gear entanglements still threaten the whales.

Angela Somma, NOAA Fisheries endangered species division chief, says the petition is the first seeking to delist humpback whales since the animals were classified as endangered in 1970.

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