

Entangled humpback whale cleared of marine debris off Maui

February 16 2022, by Caleb Jones



Lammers/ NOAA MMHSRP (permit no 18786-06)

This photo provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows an entangled humpback whale in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary off Maui. The female humpback, traveling with a male and a calf, was freed on Monday, Feb. 14, 2022. (M. Lammers/NOAA via AP) Credit: MMHSRP Permit # 18786-06

A female humpback whale traveling with a male and a calf has been freed after it was found entangled in a line with a large bundle of marine debris attached.

The whale was freed Monday while swimming in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary off Maui, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said in a statement Tuesday. The [calf](#) and male weren't entangled.

There was more than 500 feet (152 meters) of line that was wrapped tightly around the humpback's head.

"Once freed, the mother and her calf went into resting behavior, with the calf tucking under the mother's chin. The successful response increased the survival chances for both the mother and her calf," NOAA said in a statement.

The line was tangled with various kinds of marine debris that accumulates in the waters around Hawaii.

"The debris included a dozen different types of lines and netting," the statement said, with at least 30 feet (9.14 meters) of thick line estimated to be at least 1 1/2 inches (3.8 centimeters) thick. "While the [gear](#) sunk out of reach and couldn't be recovered, responders obtained critical documentation of the removed gear to determine its possible origins."

It is a federal crime to approach a [humpback whale](#) and the response team was working under a special federal permit.



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In this photo provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, officials remove mooring line and a buoy from a young humpback whale off Ukumehame, Maui, Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Federal officials say the yearling humpback was freed from entanglement in gear that included about 140 feet of line and a plastic trawling buoy. Credit: Rachel Finn/NOAA via AP

E. Lyman/NOAA MIMHSRP Permit # 18786-06



In this photo provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, officials remove mooring line and a buoy from a young humpback whale off Ukumehame, Maui, Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Federal officials say the yearling humpback was freed from entanglement in gear that included about 140 feet of line and a plastic trawling buoy. Credit: Ed Lyman/NOAA via AP

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