

# Feds mull Alaska's petition to delist humpbacks

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Federal officials say a petition filed by the state of Alaska to remove some North Pacific humpback whales from protection under the Endangered Species Act merits a closer look.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Wednesday that a petition to delist the central North Pacific whales presents substantial scientific backing that such action may be warranted. That population feeds in Alaska in the summer and breeds in Hawaii in winter.

As a result, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service will consider the petition as it reviews the status of the humpback population globally.

NOAA is also considering a petition filed last year by a Hawaii fishing association to delist the entire North Pacific humpback population.

A public comment period on the Alaska petition ends July 28.

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