

Humpback whales

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 has had a profound effect on the conservation of many endangered species, including the Humpback Whale, which was hunted between the late 1700s and the mid 1900s for their blubber (which can be turned into oil) and meat.

According to oceana.org, Humpback whales can grow to about 60 feet long and 80,000 pounds, which is the weight of roughly 584 people! They can live 80-90 years and are not a danger to humans at all. They mostly eat krill and small fish, up to 3000 pounds per day. Males sing songs underwater that can be heard 20 miles away.

Many scientists estimated that around 300,000 Humpbacks were killed worldwide in the whaling era. Their numbers fell to under 5,000 in the 1960s, and it wasn't looking good for a while.

Then in 1973, the Endangered Species Act listed humpbacks as endangered and prohibited killing them. Their numbers have been steadily rising since then, are almost up to their pre-whaling era population, and have been removed from the endangered species list.

Humpbacks are considered one of the great successes of the ESA, along with grizzlies and bald eagles. Without it we could have lost the beautiful and magnificent creatures opera singers of the ocean, the Humpback Whale.