

Bluefin tuna escapes endangered species

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Federal officials have decided to keep bluefin tuna off the endangered species list.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced Friday that after an extensive scientific review, it has determined that the giant, highly migratory fish does not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act. The agency said it is designating the bluefin stocks in the western and eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean as "species of concern."

The agency conducted the review after the Center for Biological Diversity submitted a petition seeking an endangered status for the fish. The Arizona-based organization claimed bluefin tuna is facing possible extinction because of overfishing.

But fishermen and others said the population is being fished at sustainable levels.

Listing the bluefin as threatened or endangered would have jeopardized the livelihood of tuna fishermen, U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine said. She said U.S. fishermen have led the world in efforts to conserve and rebuild bluefin tuna populations