Beached whale euthanized in Port Canaveral

Published 6:11 PM EDT Sep 26, 2016

By Dan Billow

PORT CANAVERAL, Fla. —Bystanders and deputies tried to save a stranded whale at Port Canaveral Monday, in a drama that unfolded before many onlookers.

Brevard County sheriff's deputies held the whale still at the public boat ramp while biologists and passersby arrived.

"It's nice to see the compassion of everybody helping the whale out. It's sad to see, but at least we have the shade there," said onlooker John Doepp.

Biologists from Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute determined it was a pygmy sperm whale, full grown at about 10-feet long, and likely dying of old age.

"It's in bad condition now because it's been banging up against the rocks of the jetty. So it's hard to tell how beat up it is from that, from how beat up it is because it's an old animal," said biologist Megan Stolen of Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute.

Biologists concluded there was nothing they could do for the whale, other than keep it comfortable until a veterinarian arrived to euthanize it.

Stolen said Brevard County is a hot spot for strandings of these whales. They live miles offshore, diving in deep water for squid and other prey, and are rarely seen except when stranding, she said.

Biologists will do a full examination of the whale's carcass to confirm the cause of its distress.

http://www.wesh.com/news/beached-whale-euthanized-in-port-canaveral/41836388