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10-foot pygmy sperm whale beached in Brevard euthanized



A 10-foot-long pygmy sperm whale beached itself along the sand at Spessard Holland South Beach Park in Melbourne Beach. The whale, which is supposed to weigh about 1,100 pounds, only weighed about 650 pounds, officials said. (PHOTO/Jon Shaban, Staff)

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MELBOURNE BEACH -- A severely underweight pygmy sperm whale found beached Monday along the shore of Brevard County has been euthanized, rescuers said.

The 10-foot-long whale was found on the sand at Spessard Holland South Beach Park in Melbourne Beach.

"This whale is severely emaciated," Megan Stolen, a research scientist with the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute, said after Monday's rescue. "Really, really skinny. It probably hasn't eaten in quite a while. We had concerns about it just because there's a viral epidemic in this area, but my main concern for this whale is probably cardiac disease."

Researchers say a pygmy sperm whale of that size is supposed to weigh about 1,100 pounds, but officials said this one only weighed about 650 pounds.

Because of the whale's condition, officials said it had to be euthanized on site. A necropsy will determine the reason the whale was so underweight, researchers said.

Brevard County Ocean Rescue also said they found a dead sea turtle in nearby Cocoa Beach. Officials said there were reports from the Sea Turtles Preservation Society of a sea turtle floating in the water during the weekend's speed boat races, but they could not confirm it was the same turtle found on Monday.

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