

Pygmy sperm whale euthanized at Port Canaveral

Local 6, ClickOrlando 4:13 p.m. EDT September 26, 2016



Buy Photo

(Photo: Craig Rubadoux/FLORIDA TODAY)

PORT CANAVERAL, Fla. — Rescuers euthanized an almost 10-foot-long female pygmy sperm whale that beached itself Monday along the rocks at the north side of Port Canaveral, near the Trident submarine basin.

Biologists must euthanize pygmy sperm whales because the deep diving whales don't survive in captivity. Rescuers can't replicate the whale's diet and other conditions their physiology requires.

"In rehabilitation settings they do not survive," said Wendy Noke Durden, a research scientist with Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute.

A commercial fisherman had spotted the whale and called it in.

A U.S. Coast Guard vessel put the small whale in a stretcher and hauled it to a boat ramp at the port, where the animal was later euthanized.

"She' looks likes she'd been sick for a while," said Teresa Jablonski, a research assistant at Hubbs. "We won't know until we complete the necropsy but we suspect it had heart disease."

Hubbs staff took the whale's remains for examination at their research facility in Melbourne Beach.

Hubbs, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Florida Fish and Wildlife and Conservation Commission, the Canaveral Port Authority and the Brevard Sheriff's Office responded to the scene and had been monitoring the whale since about 11 a.m.

Read or Share this story: <http://on.flatoday.com/2ddX9OO>