



Stranded Whale Breaks Free

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A humpback whale is free more than a day after becoming entangled in fishing gear about eight miles off the New Jersey coast.

Rescuers describe a long and extremely dangerous day Thursday in freeing the whale, who was stranded near Sandy Hook and then entrance to New York Harbor.

NBCNewYork learned that a lobster pot line had caught the whale's tail, and a large amount of debris was hidden under the whale's belly, further complicating the day-long effort.

Nobody was injured in freeing the entangled whale, and rescuers said they were able to get all of the debris off of it.

The Coast Guard has established a 500-yard safety zone around the whale as they worked.

According to the New York Times, the whale is about 25 to 30 feet long, and reportedly visible on the surface and breathing, said Barbara Patton, a Coast Guard spokeswoman said. However, the entanglement could be considered life-threatening.

"Entanglement" and "ship (propeller) strikes" are the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's biggest problems with marine animals, an NOAA spokeswoman told News 4. About a year ago, the organization imposed speed limits on ships entering and leaving part of the New York Bight during migration season to minimize the potential for ship strikes.

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