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Press Release

Coast Guard establishes 500-yard safety zone around entangled humpback whale (Photos available)



NEW YORK - The Coast Guard is enforcing a 500-yard safety zone around a humpback whale entangled in a lobster pot and netting eight miles east of Sandy Hook near the approach to Ambrose Channel Feb. 25, 2009.

The Coast Guard Cutter Penobscot Bay and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) vessel are on scene. The whale is reportedly visible on the surface and breathing.

An entanglement team from Center Coastal Studies based in Gloucester, Mass., is scheduled to arrive tomorrow to cut the whale free.

"We are ensuring the safety of both the animal and boaters," said Lt. j.g. Eric Hanson, Coast Guard Sector New York's command duty officer. "Coast Guard Sector New York is issuing safety marine broadcasts hourly on VHF channel 16 and will be working closely with the NOAA and other agencies to assist."

For more information regarding marine mammal stranding and entanglement, visit the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/>.

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