

Rescuers try to free humpback whale

by UPI

NEW YORK - Rescuers began Thursday trying to free a humpback whale from entangling fishing gear as Coast Guard vessels protected the animal 8 miles off the Jersey Shore.

A team from the Center for Coastal Studies, based in Provincetown, Mass., arrived in late morning, *Newsday* reported. They were cooperating in the rescue with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

Jamison Smith, the large whale disentanglement coordinator for NOAA, said the whale is 25 feet to 30 feet long, making it a juvenile. Smith said the entanglement could endanger the whale's life.

The whale was discovered Wednesday afternoon off Sandy Hook and close to shipping lanes. The Coast Guard set up a 500-yard protective area enforced by a cutter and a NOAA vessel.

Smith said entanglements occur about once a year in waters off New York and New Jersey.

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