

Dead whale forces closure of Oregon scenic viewpoint, beach

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

FLORENCE, Ore. — Heceta Head State Scenic Viewpoint and Devil's Elbow Beach north of Florence have been closed due to the presence of a dead fin whale, Oregon Parks and Recreation officials reported today.

The whale was in shallow surf on Friday, unknown to officials if whale was attempting to beach itself — OSP photo The deceased fin whale forced closure of the viewpoint and beach north of Florence — Oregon State P&R photo On Friday, the whale was in shallow surf for over 3 ½ hours, and the Oregon State Police (OSP) Fish & Wildlife trooper, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Mammal Stranding Unit and U.S. Coast Guard who had been monitoring it believed it had been able to move away from shore as the tide moved in and daylight departed.

According to OSP Sr. Trooper Scott Salisbury, about 6 p.m., March 6, a U.S.C.G. helicopter reported that the whale may have beached itself about a mile north of Driftwood Shores near Sutton Creek. Arriving personnel

spotted the 40 to 50-foot whale floating in shallow surf.

The whale, now deceased, precipitated the closure of the viewpoint and the beach due to concerns for traffic safety and protection of the carcass, officials said.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department staff, working with biologists and law enforcement officials, are on site.

• Tampering with a whale carcass -- removing pieces or altering it in other ways -- is prohibited by federal law, officials reminded.

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