

## Whales vanish from San Francisco delta

*by UPI*

SAN FRANCISCO - A pair of humpback whales who ended up 90 miles off course in San Francisco may have slipped out under the Golden Gate Bridge without anyone seeing.

Scientists and rescue team members say the mother whale and her calf -- nicknamed Delta and Dawn -- may have exited the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta under the cover of night, avoiding the rescuers who spent two weeks trying to coax the giant mammals out of the Delta and into the ocean, the San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News reported Thursday.

"We all were hoping we could personally witness them returning to the ocean," said Trevor Spradlin, a marine biologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and part of the rescue team. "But we just wanted them to be safe and sound."

Spradlin told the Mercury News that for the sake of scientific research, "we have a dedicated effort to find them -- to have a definitive idea of where they went."

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

*Whales vanish from San Francisco delta by UPI*