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Humpback whale washes up on Cohasset beach

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COHASSET — A dead humpback whale that washed up on a Cohasset beach Sunday had last been seen floating in the water of Gloucester, according to the New England Aquarium

Tony LaCasse, spokesman for the aquarium, said a whale biologist at the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown confirmed that the juvenile whale carcass found on the beach near 399 Atlantic Ave. in Cohasset on Sunday was the same one that was spotted dead off the coast of Gloucester on Friday. The Gloucester Daily Times reported the whale, which was born in 2016, was floating on its back with no apparent cause of death, about two miles out of Gloucester Harbor.

LaCasse said the aquarium, which sent staff to examine the whale, plans to perform a necropsy on the carcass if they are able to retrieve it. Due to heavy surf, retrieval efforts would have to wait until the harbormaster gives them the go-ahead.

“Right now it is quite literally a moving target,” he said.

The whale is the third to wash up on a South Shore beach this summer. On Aug. 20, a 52-foot-long fin whale was found on Duxbury Beach, and on Aug. 5 a 27-foot minke whale died shortly after being discovered in shallow waters just off the coast of Brant Rock in Marshfield.

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