



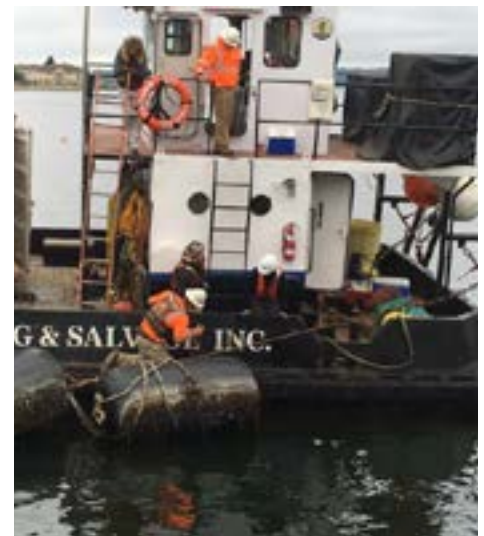
Global Tows a Humpback Whale to Its Resting Place

Sometimes urgent jobs send Global halfway round the world. Other times the call comes right from its own neighborhood. Such was the case earlier this month when the company was called upon to remove a humpback whale that had stranded and later died in the shallows beside the Fauntleroy ferry dock in West Seattle. This is actually the second whale removal Global has performed in the area in recent years, having towed a fin whale carcass stranded in Burien in 2013. While that carcass was taken to a remote beach to decompose, this whale needed to be towed and sunk.

A crew from the ferry dock tied buoys to the whale and towed it with the rising tide to the neighboring dock where it stayed overnight. Global arrived the next day on their vessel, Prudhoe Bay. While a relatively straightforward job, it still required specific knowledge.

David DeVilbiss, VP of Casualty and Emergency Response, says the process “involves towing it out and weighing it down with benign weights – basically, concrete blocks” and then cutting it loose to float to the bottom. Because the carcass fills with gases as it decomposes, special care is required to make sure it doesn’t float back to the surface.

Global’s crew tied the buoys holding the whale to their boat and towed the carcass to an approved location in Puget Sound for final resting in around 400 feet of water. A marine biologist assisted and was able to gather more information regarding the whale’s death by inspecting the humpback’s exposed underside while on the water.



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The humpback was a juvenile female, likely three to four years old, measuring 39 feet. The species can grow to more than 50 feet. Females reach breeding age at five. Whale specialists from several organizations, including Cascadia Research Collective, quickly arrived at the scene after being notified of the stranding. Efforts were made to keep the dying cetacean hydrated as the tide receded, but it died later in the day. An initial necropsy indicated the whale was severely malnourished and showed bite marks from a killer whale(s); though no determination could be made on the scene as to why the whale stranded.

While a sad occurrence, the stranded whale is indicative of increased humpback populations along the Northwest coast. Decomposing carcasses are also a boon to underwater life, releasing nutrients feeding fish and fauna, and creating ecosystems lasting decades.

Read the full hour-by-hour update on this project on the [West Seattle Blog website](#).



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