Grace Period for Collectors to Return Whale Souvenirs

Thursday, 11 October 2012

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A few weeks ago a dead humpback whale washed up on a beach in Chiniak after what was most likely a killer whale attack. Marine mammal specialist Bree Witteveen told KMXT that the plan was to leave the whale on the beach and let it decompose naturally, but she reminded Kodiak residents that it is illegal to take hard parts from the whale. Despite the warning, some community members did not listen.

" Tim Gold from NOAA enforcement called me this morning and said that they had been out to check it out and noticed that there was quite a bit of bones and baleen and things missing," she said. "I know that as the whale continues to decompose more things become more exposed and it becomes easier to snag pieces. & rdquo;

She said NOAA enforcement is offering a grace period for people to return anything they may have taken from the whale.

-- (Stolen Whales 2 :09 "They would like anyone who does who has already collected hard parts they can voluntarily abandon them at Gibson Cove, no questions asked, no fines assessed, but they want people to do that within the next week.")

If someone is caught with hard parts of a whale they can expect to pay a fine.

(Stolen Whales 3 :12 " What happens is that they get turned over to the NOAA general council in Juneau and those folks assess a fine there. There's no specific number you can pin to it but there is penalties associated with it.")

Witteveen said people are still more than welcome to go check the dead whale out, but they should resist the urge to take home souvenirs. She added that it's probably a good idea to bring nose plugs as the whale is getting pretty stinky the more it decomposes.

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