



NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service  
**Alaska Region**  
**JOINT NEWS RELEASE**  
P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668



**For release:** July 28, 2010

**Contact:** Julie Speegle, 907-586-7032  
Lt. Cmdr. Marc Randolph, 907-463-2465

### **NOAA to perform necropsy on deceased whale discovered on bow of cruise ship**

**Juneau, AK** – This morning at about 8 a.m., Princess Cruises' *Sapphire Princess* discovered a whale on top of the ship's bulbous bow, the part of the bow that goes through the water. The *Sapphire Princess* was south of Juneau near Tracy Arm at the time the whale was discovered.

The *Sapphire Princess* notified the U.S. Coast Guard, who contacted NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service in Juneau. Both the Coast Guard and NOAA's enforcement and protected resources divisions are responding to the incident.

"Coast Guard Station Juneau is working with NOAA, shipping agents, and Princess Cruises management to help mitigate any biological or navigational hazard in the port and providing a response asset on scene during the removal process," said Cmdr. Matt Jones, Acting Sector Commander.

The *Sapphire Princess* held in an area south of Juneau while a tugboat and divers worked to dislodge the whale carcass. That operation was complete and the ship was cleared to proceed to port shortly after 3 p.m.



The tugboat will transport the carcass to a location suitable for a necropsy. A team of marine mammal specialists from NOAA will perform a necropsy on the whale to determine the cause of death. The species of the whale is not definitively known at this time, but NOAA officials say from photos it appears to be a juvenile humpback.

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement will interview crewmembers of the Sapphire Princess regarding the circumstances surrounding the incident.