

Dead Humpback found

■ Melissa Hills

A beached young adult male Humpback whale was found last week Monday close to the Little Brak River mouth, on the Hartenbos side.

"We are not exactly sure what caused its death. There aren't any obvious signs of ship-strike damage," said Edith Mertz, a scientist of Oceans Research and MEC students of Pretoria University.

There were shark bite marks around its mouth but they couldn't have caused the whale's death.

"I suspect that it was sick and wanted to be in shallower waters, where it then died before being beached. The white that you see on the photos is blubber or fat."

Edith explained that the skin is the first thing that starts to rot off once an animal dies at sea.

"What we also find awesome is that the skin was peeled off by the reef as the whale was pushed to shore."

The removal of the carcass will be dealt with by the local authorities as they see fit and safe, said Edith.

Oceans Research interns taking samples and collecting data off the beached whale close to the Little Brak River mouth.

Photo: www.fionaayerst.com