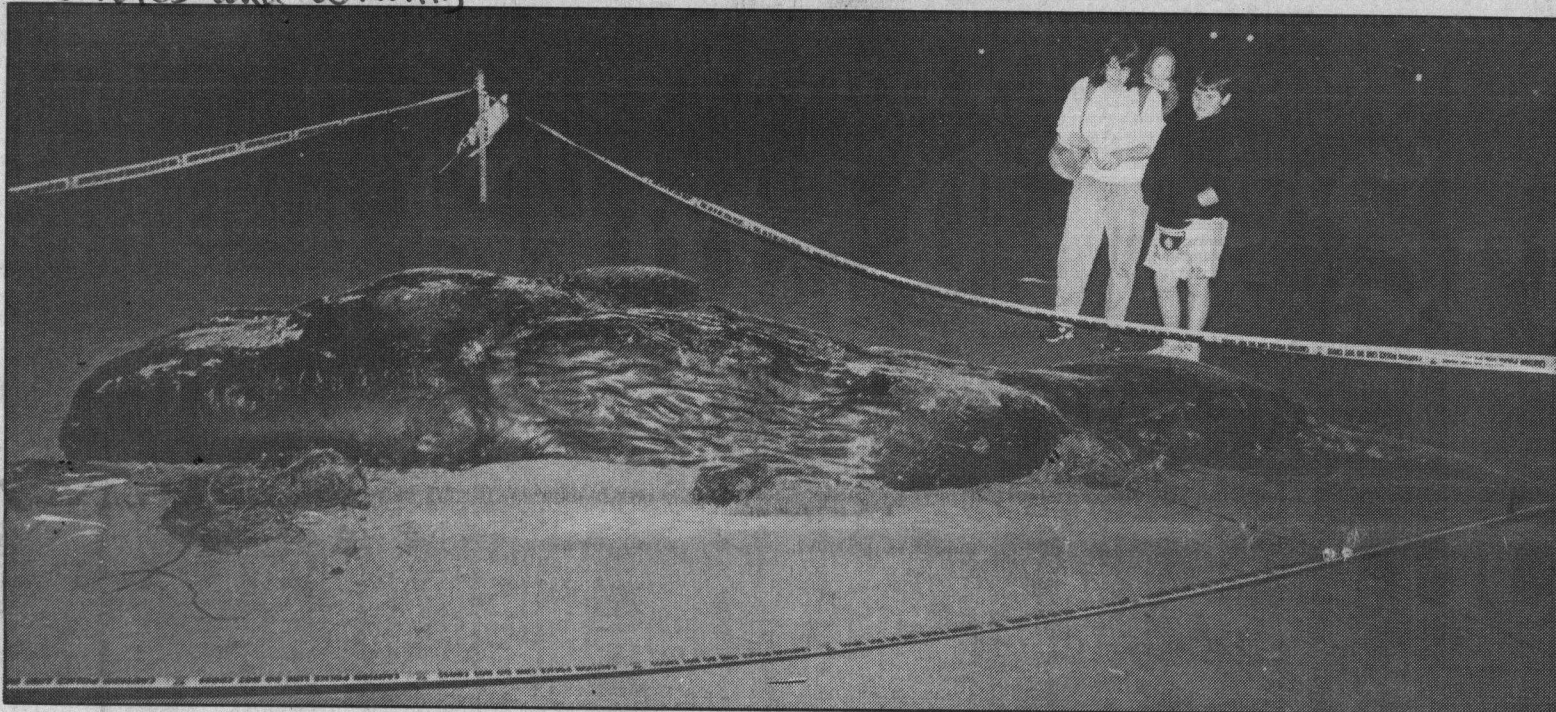


# Baby whale dies

Whales and Whaling



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Capitola resident Diane Vliet looks at beached baby sperm whale with her sons, Andy and Michael.

## Sperm whale washes up on beach

By KATHY KREIGER  
Sentinel staff writer

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CAPITOLA — The ailing baby sperm whale spotted last Thanksgiving off Seaclyff Beach washed up dead on the Capitola Beach early Sunday morning.

Police began getting calls at 7:30 a.m. Sunday that the 1-ton cetacean had washed up on Hopper's Beach, between the wharf and the cliffs.

Researchers who tried to help the ailing whale when it was alive were not happy with the

location where it washed up.

Earlier in the week, Howard Rhinehart of UC Santa Cruz's Long Marine Lab said researchers would be interested in studying the whale if and when it washed up. He was hoping the whale would end up on a state beach, rather than a beach under local jurisdiction, because he said a state beach would afford them more time to study it and take samples.

What will happen next is not certain.

According to Nancy Black, of

the Moss Landing Marine Lab, which has aided in the effort, members of Long Marine Lab were trying to get permission from Capitola officials Sunday evening to dissect the whale, which Black said would be done as soon as possible.

Another possibility, according to Steve Tierney, Coast Guard officer of the day, is that researchers will be allowed to remove the whale's head for further study. If so, Tierney said the Coast Guard will then tow the whale's body some 10 miles out to sea.

If Capitola doesn't give permission for the whale to be dissected, the Coast Guard may also tow the whale off the beach and take it further down, where it will drift up onto a state beach, Tierney said.

The Coast Guard plans to send one of their 41-foot utility boats Monday morning to tow the whale off, with or without its head, at high tide, which is at 10:04 a.m.

Monday night's high tide was not expected to be high enough to reach the whale.