

# BOSTON Herald

Kathleen McKiernan Sunday, March 11, 2018

## Beached porpoise a sign of clean harbor



*New England Aquarium biologists prepare a harbor porpoise stranded in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood for an animal autopsy. Credit: New England Aquarium*

In addition to the storm surge that swamped parts of downtown Boston, Wednesday's nor'easter blew ashore a marine mammal in Dorchester and many Hub residents are unaware that such creatures are swimming in waterways around the city, which experts say is a sign of the Boston Harbor cleanup's positive impact.

Members of the New England Aquarium's Marine Animal Rescue Team rushed to the Harbor Point housing complex Wednesday after receiving word that a female harbor porpoise had become stranded on the shore. Unfortunately, the little dolphin, which was later determined to be pregnant, died just before they arrived.

"It is a reminder for people, we have many species and thousands of dolphins that swim in Boston Harbor year-round," said aquarium spokesman Tony LaCasse, who added that it's not unusual for harbor porpoises to cruise through the area from midwinter to midspring.

Harbor porpoises, the smallest dolphin species found in New England — usually measuring between 4 1/2 feet and 6 feet long and weighing less than 200 pounds — have been spotted swimming in the outer harbor from South Boston to Hull and on the northern side from Winthrop to Eastie.

They've even been seen cruising the waters off the Seaport District and in Fort Point Channel in pursuit of a variety of small fish species that spawn in the area.

Their unlikely presence in the city, LaCasse said, is a result of the harbor clean-up effort in the 1990s.