

Fishing rope cut from endangered whale off Georgia

February 20 2014, by Russ Bynum

Wildlife officials say they cut away more than 280 feet of commercial fishing line being dragged by an endangered right whale off the Georgia coast.

Clay George, a marine mammal biologist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, said Thursday officials had to leave the whale with at least 20 feet of the thick rope still tangled in its mouth. He said there's "a fighting chance" the whale would be able to free itself.

The right whale was spotted Sunday offshore near Jacksonville, Fla., and [wildlife officials](#) got close enough to cut away most of the rope Monday about 40 miles offshore from Darien, Ga.

Experts estimate only about 450 [right whales](#) still exist. Entanglement in commercial fishing gear is considered one of the greatest threats to their survival.

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