

Vets ready for rare efforts to save ailing endangered orca

August 7 2018



This September 2015 photo provided by NOAA Fisheries shows an aerial view of an adult female Southern Resident killer whale (J16) swimming with her calf (J50). Federal officials are weighing options to save an emaciated endangered orca that includes feeding it live salmon dosed with medicine. Biologists are worried about the survival of a 4-year-old orca known as J-50, a member of a dwindling population of whales that spend time in Pacific Northwest waters (NOAA Fisheries/Vancouver Aquarium via AP, File)

Veterinarians are preparing rare emergency efforts to administer antibiotics to a young emaciated orca that's part of an endangered pod and whose survival is uncertain.

Teri Rowles with NOAA Fisheries told reporters Tuesday that veterinarians will do a health assessment when the 3½-year-old female killer whale shows up again in Washington state waters.

They'll decide then whether to administer [antibiotics](#) using a dart injector or a long pole syringe.

They would decide after that whether to feed the orca live salmon from a boat, which has never been attempted in the wild.

The animal, which was last seen Friday, is part of a population of critically endangered orcas that's dwindled to just 75 whales.

Another female orca from the group attracted global attention as she tried to keep her dead baby afloat.

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