

My name is Judith Scott and used to work as Naturalist for Cape Ann Whale Watch on the Hurricane II. During my time at Cape Ann Whale Watch I would do my dock talk every day standing on a life size drawing of one of our favorite whales, Spoon, painted on the dock. At about 52 feet long, she is thought to be the one of the largest humpback whales that regularly visits Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary to feed and she has brought a number of calves to Stellwagen also. Spoon was first sighted in 1977, so she is over 30 years old. Over the 11 years I have spent visitng the whales on Stellwagen, I have seen Spoon many times out on the bank travelling and feeding on the sand eels.



This Winter I was lucky enough to go to the Dominican Republic on a swim with humpback whales trip on our Stellwagen whales breeding grounds, Silver Bank. During this incredible week spent with Conscious Breath Adventures, I got to go in the water with a Mum and Calf whale on 3 occasions. The Mum was a huge whale, very calm and her calf was one of the friendliest they saw all season. He played around with us, swishing bubbles at us with his tail, and generally larking about like a 12 foot puppy. We nicknamed this whale 'Lucky' because despite him only being at most a couple of months old, he had already been entangled in fishing gear. Lucky had a cut in one of his pectoral fins and scars around his belly. I think it is incredibly sad that this can have happened already to such a young whale. At least Lucky appears to have managed to disentangle himself.



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On a recent trip back to Cape Ann Whale Watch, a friend from the Dominican Republic came whale watching and from a picture she had taken of Lucky's Mum in the Dominican Republic, she was ID'd as Spoon! This is very exciting because thousands of humpbacks from all over the North Atlantic use the Silver Bank for breeding, so it is an incredible coincidence that I got to swim with the one humpback whale we had chosen to paint on the dock at Cape Ann Whale Watch.



And the best part of the story is that on 6th July we saw Spoon and her calf again on Stellwagen Bank. This means that Lucky has made it on the long migration north from Silver Bank, a dangerous time for a young calf and is hopefully learning from his very experienced Mum how to find enough food to live a very long life.

So, I have been very privileged to see this individual whale and her calf in both the feeding and breeding grounds. I do hope that Lucky has learnt his lesson and is able to stay away from fishing gear as well as the other threats that humpbacks face, and he continues to entertain us and teach us about his fascinating species for many years to come.

Thanks Jodi Frediani for letting us use your photos!

Jodi Frediani Photography