

For Immediate Release November 25

Contact Bonnie Strawser- 252-473-1131 ext 230 or Cindy Heffley 252-987-1118

Body of Fishing Vessel Sea Tractor Owner/Captain Recovered on Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge

The body recovered on Saturday from the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge beach was identified today as Kenneth Rose, Sr., one of the three crewmen of the Sea Tractor, a 44-foot fishing boat which was lost at sea on November 11 off the coast of Cape May, New Jersey. According to the U. S. Coast Guard, a transmission was received from the emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) on the Sea Tractor at 7:35 p.m., indicating it was in distress. On-board the vessel were Kenneth Rose Sr., 73; his son Kenneth Jr., 49; and crewman Larry Forrest, 55, all from North Carolina. A rescue helicopter from Atlantic City arrived at the site an hour later and found a debris field, including an empty life raft. Until Saturday, there had been no sign of the three men.

On Saturday, at 12:15 pm, Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Law Enforcement Officer Jay Eddy received a call that a body had washed ashore on the beach at the north end of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. A refuge visitor who was collecting seashells on the beach discovered the body. Cape Hatteras National Seashore Ranger Bill Reynolds responded to the scene, verified the report, and contacted Eddy. Eddy commented, "The body was found approximately 200 yards south of the south jetty at Oregon Inlet and appeared to be a deceased white male."

Immediately following the discovery of the body, thoughts turned to the men aboard the Sea Tractor. News of the barge anchored near Cape May that had run aground in Sandbridge, Va and documentation of the Sea Tractor's life raft washing up several days prior to the body on refuge beaches led to the logical suspicion that the unidentified man may be one of the Sea Tractor's crew. Eddy contacted a member of the family to gather identifying information.

Several unique scars and a identifiable gold ring provided the evidence needed to point the Medical Examiner to a probable identification. Confirmation that the body was, in fact, Kenneth Rose, Sr. was received today from the Medical Examiner. Eddy coordinated notification of the family with the Newport Police Department and Carteret County Sheriff's Office. Also participating in the investigation were Investigative Sergeant Kathryn Bryan and Deputies J. D. Etheridge and Pamela James from the Dare County Sheriff's Office, as well as officers with the National Park Service and U. S. Coast Guard..

For questions, please contact the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 252-473-1131 ext 230.

Contact:

Bonnie W. Strawser
Visitor Services Manager
Alligator River/Pea Island
National Wildlife Refuges
P. O. Box 1969
Manteo, NC 27954