

Ilya, the manatee who swam all the way up to Cape Cod from Florida this summer, may need to be rescued today from the stormy, cold waters off Elizabeth, NJ, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman Chuck Underwood says. The endangered 1,000-pound manatee was positively identified yesterday from photos taken near a refinery in Elizabeth, a heavily industrial part of New York harbor near Staten Island.

For weeks biologists and manatee lovers wondered where Ilya was, hoping he was making it back down to Florida, where manatees need to spend the winter to keep warm enough. He was last seen in Milford, CT, on September 26. So, everyone figured--or at least hoped--that he would be down at least around the Carolinas by now.

Then yesterday, Underwood says, the Wildlife Service got a call: "We've got your manatee." A quick consultation with U.S. Geological Survey NOAA, which keeps an elaborate database of 2,000-some manatees known by their boating scars, confirmed it was Ilya. His run in with boats have made him easy to ID: he has a big chunk taken out of his tail and a white scar on his head. Nicole Adimey, who runs the manatee rescue and rehabilitation program says that he still is relatively lucky for a manatee: he's never before had to be brought in for treatment.

Right now the wildlife service is trying to keep Ilya in place at a private, undisclosed refinery while a Nor'easter storm blows through. He was attracted to the spot because the run-off makes it warm. It's about 70 degrees right in his microclimate, Underwood says. Meanwhile the rest of the harbor, as you can see from this water temperature map, is dipping into the 50s and 60s. They've authorized the people at the private refinery to give Ilya vegetables and a hose for fresh water in hopes that will make him stay put. They have a net and may attempt a rescue today, Underwood says.



[Biologists Try to Rescue Ilya the Manatee from Elizabeth, NJ](#) with the end of the world