

Fact Sheet | Davidson Seamount Whale Fall

Date Seen: 10/16/19

Depth Seen: 3238m

Location: southeast apron of Davidson Seamount, in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Sighting information:

During the final dive of this year's *Nautilus* expedition season, our team discovered a whale fall while exploring Davidson Seamount off central California's coast with researchers from Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The skeletal remains of the whale lying on its back are estimated to be 4-5 meters long. The team is working to identify the species, but it is thought to be a rorqual baleen whale as indicated by baleen remaining along the whale's jawbones, and the shape of its skull.

While evidence of whale falls have been observed to remain on the seafloor for several years, this appears to be a relatively recent fall with baleen, blubber, and some internal organs remaining. The site also exhibits an interesting mid-stage of ecological succession, as both large scavengers like eel pouts are still stripping the skeleton of blubber, and bone-eating *Osedax* worms are starting to consume lipids (fats) from the bones. Other organisms seen on site include crabs, grenadier, polychaetes, and deep-sea octopus.

Press Kit with expedition video and stills (Credit: "Ocean Exploration Trust and NOAA ONMS"):
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VRfr8wg0whWKA2xb_8TvmuoB61h2l2ov

2019 Davidson Seamount Expedition overview and team members:

<https://nautiluslive.org/cruise/na117>

[Newborn octopus battles with shrimp](#)

2018 Davidson Seamount expedition overview and team members:

<https://nautiluslive.org/cruise/na103>

Contact: press@oet.org

All credits for underwater images and video go to "Ocean Exploration Trust and NOAA ONMS"

General Nautilus and ROV topside imagery: [Photos](#) and [Footage](#). Credit: "OET/Nautilus Live"