

Decomposed body of woman found in Niagara River

Published: December 6, 2011, 2:50 PM

Updated: December 6, 2011, 3:09 PM

The badly decomposed body of a woman was pulled Sunday morning from the west Niagara River shoreline on Grand Island near Fix Road, the Erie County Sheriff's Department reported today.

A North Tonawanda duck hunter spotted the corpse at about 6 a.m. The woman was wearing a wet suit. Inside the wet suit, authorities found what appeared to be identification papers and multiple plastic packages, which contained newspapers and letters, that had been taped to her body, the sheriff's department said.

The investigation indicates the woman had been reported missing from her native Montreal in 2006, and may have attempted to swim from Canada to the U.S. to gain illegal entry into the country.

The sheriff's department, with the assistance of the U.S. Border Patrol, said it was trying to confirm her identity and notify next of kin.

The county Medical Examiner's Office ruled the cause of death as drowning, but it is not known how long the woman was in the water.