

Nearly 60 whales die in New Zealand mass stranding

August 20 2010



File photo shows volunteers pouring buckets of water over remaining live pilot whales found on a beach in New Zealand. Nearly 60 of the sea mammals have died after becoming stranded on a beach in the far north of New Zealand, conservation officials have said.

Nearly 60 pilot whales have died after becoming stranded on a beach in New Zealand on Friday, conservation officials said.

The mass stranding of a pod of 73 whales was discovered mid-morning and Carolyn Smith from the Department of Conservation said the whales probably beached overnight, which was why so many died before a rescue operation was launched.

The area around Kaitaia beach, in the far north of [New Zealand](#), was experiencing heavy rain and wind which Smith said helped the surviving whales by ensuring they did not dry out but made it difficult for rescuers preparing to refloat the [mammals](#).

At least five people are needed to work with each of the whales, which weigh up to 1.5 tonnes.

Whale beachings are not uncommon along the New Zealand coast and more than 100 pilot [whales](#) died in a stranding in the South Island last December.

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Citation: Nearly 60 whales die in New Zealand mass stranding (2010, August 20) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-whales-die-zealand-mass-stranding.html>

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