

Over 100 Beluga whales 'trapped in Bering Sea'

December 14 2011



A beluga whale exhales a bubble ring as part of a performance at the AQUAS aquarium in Hamada, Japan. Over 100 Beluga whales are trapped in water between ice floes in the Chukotka region of Russia's Far East, the authorities said, calling on the government to send an ice-breaker to free them.

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"A group of over 100 [Beluga whales](#) are cut off from the sea and are prisoners of ice floes in the [Bering Sea](#)," the Chukotka region said in a statement on its website, saying the local governor Roman Kopin had requested an ice-breaker.

It said that the whales were trapped just 15 kilometres (10 miles) south

of the village of Yanrakynot on the Bering Sea.

The statement said the Kopin had written a letter to Transport Minister Igor Levitin and Emergencies Minister Sergei Shoigu "to study the possibility of sending an ice-breaker to save the whales."

It said that the whales risk becoming starved and the advance of the ice floes was reducing the space that they have to swim in.

"Given the lack of food and the speed at which the water is freezing, all the animals are threatened with exhaustion and death," it added.

The Beluga whale is a [protected species](#) in Russia and it is one of a handful of [wild animals](#) whose cause has been championed by Russian Prime Minister and nature lover Vladimir Putin.

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