

# Indonesian rescuers free stranded whale

July 29 2012

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This photograph released by Jakarta Animal Aid Network shows rescuers and navy divers in Indonesia helping a sperm whale return to the sea after it was stranded in shallow waters off the coast of West Java province for four days.

Rescuers and navy divers in Indonesia Saturday helped a sperm whale return to the sea after it was stranded in shallow waters off the coast of West Java province for four days.

The 11-metre (36-feet) whale had been stuck near Pakis Jaya beach since Wednesday, attracting local residents who paid half a US dollar each for boat rides close to the animal, thereby hampering rescue efforts.

"We gradually pulled the whale into [deeper waters](#) with a tugboat. When it reached a 20-metre depth, we released it back into the sea," Benvika from the Jakarta Animal Aid Network told AFP by phone from the beach, 120 kilometres (75 miles) east of the capital Jakarta.

"When we cut the rope tied to the tugboat, the whale seemed very

exhausted. It was floating for a while... spouted water from its head and started swimming to the north," said Benvika, who like many [Indonesians](#) goes by one name.

Up to 30 boats carrying tourists had converged around the whale at one time before the rescuers arrived, as the animal struggled to swim out to sea.

Some onlookers jumped onto the whale, causing wounds to its body.

A few fishermen had also tried to crudely pull the animal back to sea, also hurting it in the process, he said, adding the whale was covered with blisters on its back.

"We're very proud to save it and also glad as the whale still has a spirit to live," Benvika said, adding that 22 navy divers helped with the [rescue effort](#).

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