

# Dutch give up hope of saving stranded whale

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"We decided late last night after consultations that we will not try to save the stranded whale any more," Henriette de Waal, spokesperson for the Ecomare nature conservation group told AFP.

The drama, which has gripped animal-loving Netherlands started after the humpback, now dubbed "Johannes" was found washed up on a sand bank on Wednesday near the island of Texel.

Initially the whale freed itself at high tide, but seemed disorientated and stranded once again shortly afterwards, Ecomare said.

Rescue workers tried several times to pull the animal to deeper water without success—with the last attempt on Thursday evening ending in failure after a net around the aquatic mammal broke and a rescue helicopter experienced technical problems.

"The whale is also stranded in a dangerous area called the "Razende Bol" (Raging Ball), with strong tides and high winds," De Waal said, which hampered the now cancelled rescue attempt.

"The mayor of Texel has ordered that the area be cordoned off and the animal allowed to die in peace," she said, adding it was impossible to tell how long that would take.

Meanwhile, the drama has gripped the Netherlands with many daily newspapers reporting on its progress.

"The Dutch like their animals," said the popular daily tabloid Algemeen Dagblad, adding "The Netherlands is praying for Johannes".

It added however that "according to experts there is no way to save it".

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