

Necropsies begin for 25 pilot whales found dead

January 24 2014



In this Friday, Jan. 24, 2014 photo provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) some of the of 25 dead pilot whales that were found on shore near Marco Island, Fla., are shown. The whales were found two days after eight other pilot whales died near Lover's Key State Park, about 40 miles north. Biologists say pilot whales are prone to mass strandings because they form close-knit pods that won't leave a sick whale behind. (AP Photo/NOAA)

Teams of biologists are investigating the deaths of 25 pilot whales in the shallow waters off southwest Florida.

Necropsies began Friday morning on 16 males and nine females found on Kice Island. Boaters found the carcasses Thursday.

Officials with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Fisheries Service say the whales were part of a pod first spotted in the area Sunday. State wildlife officials marked some of the whales that had temporarily stranded near Naples, and the markings helped identify the marine mammals found near Marco Island.

The whales were found two days after eight other [pilot whales](#) died near Lover's Key State Park, about 40 miles north. Biologists say pilot whales are prone to mass strandings because they form close-knit pods that won't leave a sick whale behind.



Twenty-five dead pilot whales discovered along the shore of Kice Island on the southwest Florida coastline on Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014 await National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration researchers, who will perform necropsies on Friday. At least 33 pilot whales have been found dead in the area since Sunday. (AP Photo/Naples Daily News, Carolina Hidalgo)



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