

Stranded whales to be euthanised in New Zealand

January 16 2014



File photo taken on February 20, 2011 by New Zealand's Department of Conservation shows pilot whales stranded on a remote beach on Stewart Island

New Zealand conservation officials said Thursday they would have to euthanise eight pilot whales stranded on a remote beach where five others died earlier this week.

The decision to put the whales down was made after they repeatedly

returned to the beach after each attempt to shepherd them out to sea.

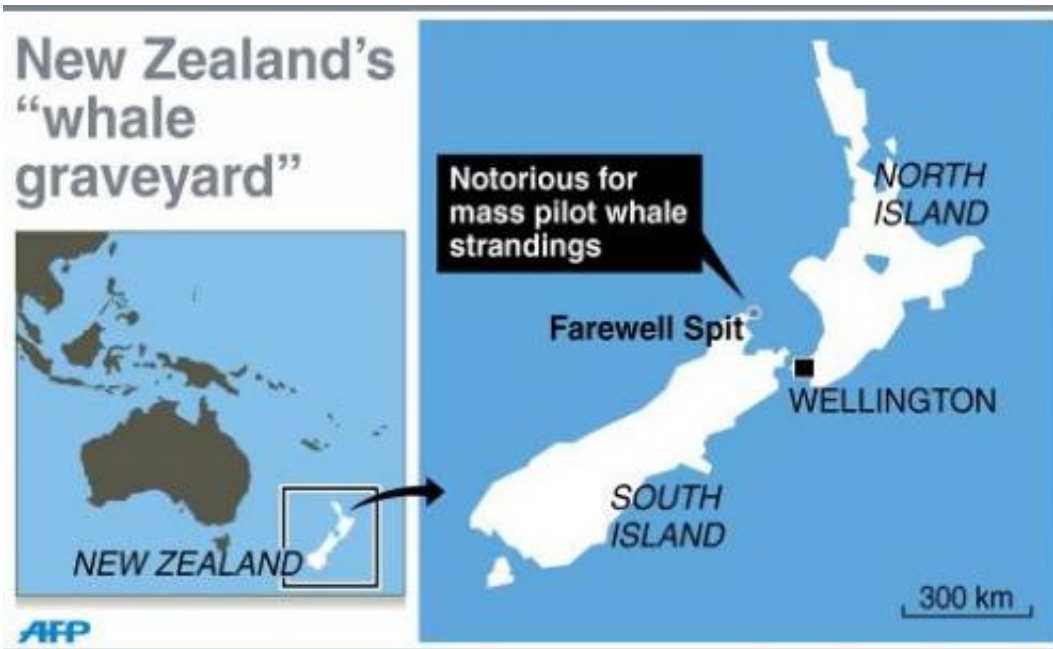
They were part of a pod of 65 whales sighted near Farewell Spit at the top of the South Island on Tuesday.

Of the 13 whales which became stranded then, five died on the first night and eight more resisted frantic attempts by [conservationists](#) to move them out to [sea](#).

"We have done all we can to help these whales but there is only so much we can do for them. Euthanising them humanely relieves their suffering," regional department of conservation manager John Mason said.

"It is a hard call to make but the whales appear to be stressed and suffering from the ordeal of being beached for hours several times over the past two days."

Farewell Spit, about 150 kilometres (90 miles) from the tourist city of Nelson, is frequently the scene of mass strandings by [pilot whales](#), with scientists unsure why they swim ashore in [large groups](#).



Map showing Farewell Spit in New Zealand, notorious for mass pilot whale strandings

Earlier this month a pod of 39 pilot whales died after beaching themselves in the same area.

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