

# Whale washes ashore on British beach

February 4 2016

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A sperm whale is stranded in shallow water after the tide came in at Hunstanton Beach in Norfolk, eastern England, on February 4, 2016

A sperm whale washed up in shallow water off a beach in Britain on Thursday, the 29th such stranding in Europe in the last two weeks.

Crowds of people watched as the whale floundered in the water off Hunstanton [beach](#) on the east coast of England.

But rescuers said there was nothing they could do to save it due to its size and weight, and it died on Thursday evening.

"We're very sad to confirm that the whale has died but it is a bit of a relief because it had been in quite a lot of suffering," said Stephen Marsh, operations manager of the British Divers Marine Life Rescue.

Another whale washed up on the same beach last month, and three more washed up on the nearby Lincolnshire coast.

Marsh said that the rise in strandings could be due to an increase in [whale populations](#).

"Strandings do happen naturally, and we are just not used to seeing them as we decimated the population through whaling," Marsh said.

"Bachelor pods" of males leave the females and calves in warmer areas, and travel back on an annual basis to mate, Marsh said.

"We don't know if they were trying to migrate down to the tropics, but there's no sign yet of any man-made activity that would cause them to come in, but that is being investigated."

Sperm [whales](#) are the largest toothed predator and can measure up to 20 metres (67 feet) long.

They struggle to use their acoustic orientation to navigate in [shallow water](#) and may become beached.

Wildlife protection groups also blame the underwater noise from sea traffic and oil platforms for interfering with acoustic signals.

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