

Endangered Puget Sound orca found dead off Canadian coast

December 23 2016

Scientists say an orca found dead off the coast of British Columbia belongs to the endangered population of killer whales that spend time in Washington state waters.

Center for Whale Research scientist Ken Balcomb said Thursday that he and others have confirmed the whale was an 18-year-old male called J-34. They based the identification on photographs and its unique markings.

The orca was seen floating near the shore Tuesday near Sechelt, about 40 miles northwest of Vancouver.

The whale was towed to a beach, and Canadian officials performed a necropsy Wednesday. The center is awaiting those results for a cause of death.

Balcomb said in a statement that at least four members of the J pod, one of three families of southern resident [killer whales](#), have died this year.

The [population](#) now totals 79 animals.

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Citation: Endangered Puget Sound orca found dead off Canadian coast (2016, December 23) retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-12-endangered-puget-orca-dead-canadian.html>

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