

# Fresh whale stranding on notorious New Zealand beach

February 10 2017

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Volunteers pour water over the stranded Pilot whales during a mass stranding at Farewell Spit on February 11, 2017

Rescue workers are in a race against time to refloat 100 whales stranded on a New Zealand shore a day after a mass beaching left hundreds dead.

It was not known if the whales found Saturday were a fresh pod or survivors from Friday's stranding at Farewell Spit in the Golden Bay region at the north-western tip of South Island.

The area, about 150 kilometres (95 miles) west of the tourist town of Nelson, is notorious for whale strandings and has witnessed at least nine mass beachings in the past decade.

"There are 100 live whales on the beach this morning. It is not known at this stage where the whales that were refloated (on Friday) are now," Department of Conservation (DOC) ranger Kathy Inwood said.

The sun was making it difficult for volunteers to keep the whales cool while they waited for the late morning high tide to get the mammals back into the water.

"We have a bit of a problem today with the hot sun which is not good for the whales. We were lucky yesterday with the cloud," DOC official Andrew Lamason told Fairfax Media.

It would take several hours after the whales were refloated to know if the mission had been successful.

Many of the whales that survived Friday's beaching remained in the bay as darkness fell.

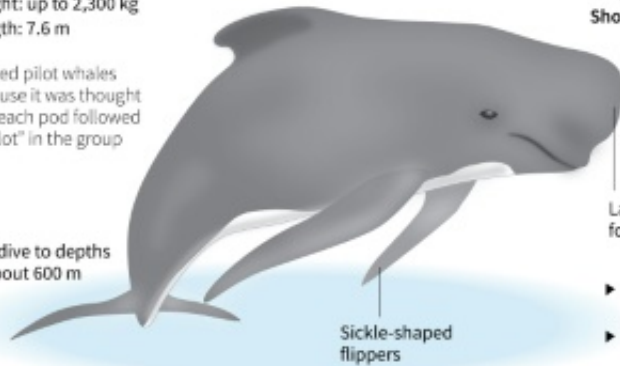
## Pilot whale

One of the largest members of the dolphin family

Weight: up to 2,300 kg  
Length: 7.6 m

Named pilot whales because it was thought that each pod followed a "pilot" in the group

Can dive to depths of about 600 m



Two types:

**Long finned:** *Globicephala melas*

**Short finned:** *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

Differ slightly in  
- size  
- tooth count  
- flipper length  
- skull formation

Large bulbous forehead

- ▶ Commonly seen in tight, sociable pods
- ▶ Each pod has between 20-100 whales

### Distribution

Long-finned pilot whales



Source: CSM/NOAA Fisheries/IUCN/NZ Department of Conservation

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Pilot whales are one of the species most involved in mass strandings

"If you designed something to catch whales then Golden Bay is probably the perfect design," Lamason said.

When the first mass beaching of 416 [pilot whales](#) was found on the beach on Friday morning nearly 300 were already dead.

Pilot [whales](#) grow up to six metres (20 feet) long and are the most

common species of whale in New Zealand waters.

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