

Hundreds of dead dolphins wash up on French coast

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Each year since 2017, a record number of dead dolphins have washed up on France's Atlantic coast between January and April, the Pelagis observatory says

A record number of dead dolphins have washed up on France's Atlantic coast in recent months after being caught in fishing nets, the Pelagis

observatory said Thursday.

"We've had around 1,200 small cetaceans along the [coast](#)" of the Bay of Biscay, of which more than 90 percent were common dolphins, biologist Olivier Van Canneyt told AFP.

The [observatory](#) he works for said the number of dead dolphins had set a record each year since 2017, and warned that the species could be wiped out in the area.

"There were two peaks in mid-February and mid-March linked to currents that are stronger at that time owing to low-pressure conditions," noted Van Canneyt, a specialist in sea mammals and birds.

The observatory said that around 85 percent of the dolphin carcasses that could be examined bore traces of accidental capture, while noting that almost three times as many dead dolphins had likely not even reached the coast.

Dolphins and porpoises can be caught in [fishing nets](#) and suffocated when they hunt for sea bass and whiting at the same time as fishing fleets, especially during [winter months](#) in the region.

The number of dolphins that wash up on the coast has increased this year despite efforts by the observatory to warn the mammals of a human presence by using acoustic "pingers".

Environment Minister Francois de Rugy said in March that he would unveil a plan to limit such deaths "by the end of the year".

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