

Greece: Rescue operation to help stranded young whale

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A rescue team of divers and vets attempt to care for a whale calf that became stranded in shallow water in a southern Athens seaside area, on Friday, Jan. 28, 2022. Experts said the young animal is a Cuvier's beaked whale and that it showed signs of injury. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis

Divers, vets and the coast guard were mounting a rescue operation

Friday to help a whale calf that had become trapped in shallow water in a seaside area of the Greek capital, but tests carried out on the animal showed it was in serious condition.

The animal was an injured young Cuvier's beaked whale, or *Ziphius cavirostris*, according to Arion, a research organization that provides veterinary care for stranded cetaceans. The species usually inhabits deep waters, and it was unclear how it had been injured and why it became stranded in the Alimos area of southern Athens.

"The fact that it has appeared in [shallow waters](#) means it isn't at all in good health. At this moment the animal is suffering," said Environment and Energy Deputy Minister Giorgos Amyras, who was on the scene. He said two specialized veterinarians, a specialized veterinary nurse and four aid organizations had been brought in to try to save the whale.

Blood tests and an examination showed the cetacean to be in "very serious" condition, the Environment and Energy Ministry said in a statement Friday afternoon.

The animal was found to have suffered a severe injury to its lower jaw and multiple superficial wounds to its body. Initial results from clinical tests revealed it was also suffering from severe dehydration, a low white blood cell count and anaemia, the ministry said.



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TV crews stand behind a ribbon as rescue teams of divers and vets attempt to care for a whale calf that became stranded in shallow water in a southern Athens seaside area on Friday, Jan. 28, 2022. Experts said the young animal is a Cuvier's beaked whale and that it showed signs of injury. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



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A swimmer walks on a beach as a rescue team of divers and vets attempt to care for a whale calf that became stranded in shallow water in a southern Athens seaside area on Friday, Jan. 28, 2022. Experts said the young animal is a Cuvier's beaked whale and that it showed signs of injury. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis

More tests were being carried out, while rescuers were administering fluids, electrolytes and medication and were closely monitoring the whale.

The animal was initially sighted in shallow [water](#) Thursday in the nearby area of Vouliagmeni, and divers had been called in to lead it out to sea. The operation had initially appeared successful, but it returned to shallow waters Friday morning.

"The prognosis unfortunately isn't good," Amyras said, noting that the whale's natural habitat was in deep water. "The fact that it has been in these shallow waters for so many hours doesn't give us much hope. But we of course are doing everything possible to save the animal, which is a Mediterranean species, a jewel of the Greek seas, and I hope it makes it and that we can help it."

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