

An orca calf stranded in a Canadian lagoon will be airlifted out to reunite with pod, rescuers say

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An orphaned Orca calf is shown in a lagoon near Zeballos, B.C., on Tuesday April 2, 2024. The two year-old Orca has been alone in the tidal lagoon near Little Espinosa Inlet since March 23, when its pregnant mother became trapped by the low tide and died on the rocky beach. Credit: Chad Hipolito/The Canadian Press via AP

Plans are underway by to airlift a stranded killer whale calf out of a remote tidal lagoon off northern Vancouver Island in an effort to reunite the young orca with its extended family, Canadian authorities said Wednesday.

Canadian Fisheries Department and First Nations officials said the plan involves placing the 2-year-old calf into a sling, lifting it out of the [lagoon](#) by helicopter and putting it in a net pen in the ocean while they wait for its family pod to be near before release.

Rescuers have been unable to coax the young whale out of the area since its pregnant mother was stranded at low tide in the lagoon and died March 23.

The plan was agreed to during a meeting between members of the Ehattesaht First Nation council, Fisheries Department officials and marine technical experts.

Ehattesaht First Nation Chief Simon John said his people have deep cultural and spiritual connections to orcas and the nation has been receiving calls of concern and support from around the world.

Paul Cottrell, a marine mammal coordinator with the Fisheries Department, said the rescue could occur within days, but more likely within the next two weeks.

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