

# Nearly 60 whales die in New Zealand mass stranding

20 August 2010



Whale beachings are not uncommon along the New Zealand coast and more than 100 pilot [whales](#) died in a stranding in the South Island last December.

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File photo shows volunteers pouring buckets of water over remaining live pilot whales found on a beach in New Zealand. Nearly 60 of the sea mammals have died after becoming stranded on a beach in the far north of New Zealand, conservation officials have said.

Nearly 60 pilot whales have died after becoming stranded on a beach in New Zealand on Friday, conservation officials said.

The mass stranding of a pod of 73 whales was discovered mid-morning and Carolyn Smith from the Department of Conservation said the whales probably beached overnight, which was why so many died before a rescue operation was launched.

The area around Kaitaia beach, in the far north of [New Zealand](#), was experiencing heavy rain and wind which Smith said helped the surviving whales by ensuring they did not dry out but made it difficult for rescuers preparing to refloat the [mammals](#).

At least five people are needed to work with each of the whales, which weigh up to 1.5 tonnes.

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