

《澳大利亚出现罕见大规模鲸鱼搁浅 近400头已死亡》

澳大利亚塔斯玛尼亚州西海岸发生大规模鲸鱼搁浅事件，现约有380头已经死亡，其他50头仍有生命体征，已被救援人员释放。考虑到天气和潮汐情况，救援工作可能需要持续数天。



A pod of whales, believed to be pilot whales, is seen stranded on a sandbar at Macquarie Harbour, near Strahan, Tasmania, Australia, September 21, 2020. [Photo/Agencies]

about 380 whales have died in what is suspected to be Australia's largest stranding on record, officials say.

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Since Monday, hundreds of long-finned pilot whales have been found beached on Tasmania's west coast.

??? (9?21?) ?????????????????????????????????

Rescuers had managed to save 50 by late on Wednesday, and they were trying to help the remaining estimated 30 whales.

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Tasmanian government officials said the rescue effort would continue "as long as there are live animals".

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"While they're still alive and in water, there's still hope for them - but as time goes on they do become more fatigued," said Nic Dekka, regional manager for Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service.

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Rescue efforts to save whales stranded on a sandbar take place at Macquarie Harbour, near Strahan, Tasmania, Australia, September 22, 2020. Picture taken September 22, 2020. Brodie Weeding/Pool via REUTERS

He added the focus would now also shift to removing the hundreds of carcasses scattered along the coast. A clean-up plan is still being worked out - in the past carcasses have been buried on the shore or dragged out to open sea.

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It is not fully understood why the whales became stranded. The species is known to be prone to getting beached.

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The stranding, one of the largest ever recorded globally, eclipses a previous national record of 320 set in Western Australia in 1996.

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Rescue efforts to save whales stranded on a sandbar take place at Macquarie Harbour, near Strahan, Tasmania, Australia, September 22, 2020. Picture taken September 22, 2020. Brodie Weeding/Pool via REUTERS

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The whales largely washed up on sand spits in the waters around an area called Macquarie Heads.

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The first rescuers on Monday counted about 270 whales, but a helicopter on Tuesday spotted another 200 whales nearby.

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More than 80% of Australian whale strandings take place in Tasmania and experts say Macquarie Heads is a known hotspot.

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Tasmania's previous biggest stranding was in 1935 with 294 pilot whales. Its last mass stranding was in 2009 and involved about 200 pilot whales.

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A team of about 60 people have used slings and other equipment to help pull the surviving whales off the sand banks so they are fully immersed in water.

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once the whales are "re-floated", they are guided back into deeper waters.

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Rescuers said they had escorted 50 whales back into the sea, which they deemed a "success".

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Whale experts said the surviving animals would be exhausted and weak. Pilot whales can grow up to 7m long and weigh up to three tonnes.

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Without the buoyancy of the water, the whales would also be slowly crushed by the weight of their bodies, said Prof Peter Harrison from Southern Cross University's Whale Research Group.

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buoyancy [ˈbɔɪənsi] n.??



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Scientists say the reason is often unknown but they have a range of theories, including whales being lured by fish to shore and becoming disorientated.

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Highly social mammals, pilot whales in particular are known for stranding in groups because they travel in large, close-knit communities which rely on constant communication.

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Researchers say it's possible that one leading individual could have mistakenly led the whole group to shore.

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Pilot whales are not considered endangered, although exact population numbers are not known. Scientists believe there are about one million long-finned and 200,000 short-finned pilot whales worldwide.

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