

Whale that died off Thailand had eaten 80 plastic bags

6 hours ago



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Image caption

Helpers tried to stabilise the whale but it died on Friday afternoon

A pilot whale has died off southern Thailand after swallowing 80 plastic bags, Thai marine officials say.

The whale vomited five bags during a vain attempt by conservation officials to save it in a canal in Songkhla province.

The bags, weighing about 8kg (17lbs), had made it impossible for the whale to eat food, a marine expert said.

A recent report warned the amount of plastic in the ocean could triple in a decade unless litter was curbed.

Thailand is a major user of plastic bags and its government last month announced it was considering a levy on them.

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They are believed to kill hundreds of marine animals there each year.

The small male pilot whale had been discovered ailing and unable to swim in the Na Thap Canal last Monday.



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Environmental officials used boats to try to help float the whale and erected a sunshade for it. They nursed the whale through the week but it died on Friday afternoon.



Up to 80 plastic bags extracted from within a whale are seen in Songkhla, Thailand, in this still image from a June 1, 2018 video footage by Thailand's Department of Marine and Coastal Resources. Thailand's Department of Marine and Coastal Resources/Social Media/via REUTERS

Marine biologist Thon Thamrongnawasawat told Agence France-Presse the bags would have made it impossible for the whale to eat nutritional food. "If you have 80 plastic bags in your stomach, you die," he said.