

'Willy' the Orca Whale Freed in Russia's Far East

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Rescuers have freed four orca whales that had been trapped in icy waters off Russia's Sakhalin island in the Far East, the TASS news agency reported Wednesday, citing the Emergency Situations Ministry.

The whales, including a baby, were trapped on Tuesday, but rescuers succeeded in guiding three of the animals into open waters by the end of the day, a spokesperson for the ministry's regional branch was quoted as saying.

The largest whale, reaching about 7 meters in length, was still trapped at nightfall, the spokesperson said.

“Rescuers and volunteers who stayed the night near the animal covered the whale with tarpaulin to prevent heat loss, and pushed away ice floats that could have caused injuries,” the spokesperson was quoted as saying.

Rescuers also gave the whale — whom they named Willy — an injection of adrenalin and applied vaseline ointment to its wounds, the spokesperson was quoted by TASS as saying.

At the start of high tide on Wednesday morning, rescuers began guiding Willy toward open waters, and, by early morning, the “rescue operation had been completed — Willy had reached the open sea,” the spokesperson said, TASS reported.

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