

Russian Navy May Have Trained Whale Discovered in Norway, Specialists Say

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Marine specialists in Norway have said a harnessed whale that was discovered off its coast may have been trained by the Russian Navy as part of a program to use underwater mammals for service operations.

Norwegian media reported Saturday that local fisherman Joar Hesten [removed](#) a harness from a beluga whale in northern Norway after the mammal repeatedly approached his boat. The removed harness was [reportedly](#) inscribed with the phrase "Equipment of St. Petersburg."

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"If this comes from Russia, and there is great reason to believe this, then it is likely that the Russian Navy put the harness on the whale, not scientists," Martin Biuw of Norway's Institute of Marine Research [told](#) the country's NRK news outlet.

Audun Rikardsen, a professor of Arctic and marine biology at the University of Tromsø, also said he believed the beluga could have come from Russia, NRK reported.

“This is not something any Norwegian scientist has been doing. What we think is that this may come from Russia,” he said. “We know that in Russia they have kept domestic whales in captivity and that some of them have apparently escaped and often seek out our boats,” he added.

Russia has previously been [linked](#) to “weaponizing” dolphins and whales.

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In 2014, the state-run RIA Novosti news outlet reported that Russia was looking to buy five dolphins with “perfect teeth and killer instinct” for a training program designed to make the dolphins serve Russia’s military interests. A 2017 report by the Defense Ministry’s Zvezda news channel claimed that the Russian Navy was training white whales, seals and dolphins for Arctic military roles.

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