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Humpback Whale Rescued Near Russia's Murmansk Region

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The entangled Humpback whale called Stanislav. **t.me/boomerangclub**

A rescue team has freed a humpback whale from a fishing net in the Barents Sea north of Russia's Murmansk region, the state environmental watchdog Rosprirodnadzor said Sunday.

In Russia's first operation of its kind, which took almost two weeks to complete, rescuers managed to get close to the whale — whom they called Stanislav — on a small boat. After hours of searching and numerous failed attempts, they finally managed on Sunday to remove the fishing net that was constricting the animal's neck and mouth.

The entangled whale was first spotted near the village of Teriberka on June 2, reportedly unable to open his mouth and with wounds on his body.

The operation to rescue the animal was coordinated between the authorities, scientists, NGOs and the mining company Nornickel. Specialists trained in animal disentanglement were flown in from Russia's Far East to the northwestern Murmansk region.

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Repeated rescue attempts were complicated by larger whales shielding Stanislav as a boat approached, as well as by the harsh weather conditions of the Russian Arctic, according to Anastasia Kunitza, a marine mammal specialist and member of the rescue team.

“People told us, ‘You rescue the whale, and we'll help however we can.’ Such support was very valuable because all we could do was focus on our task — helping the whale. And we did everything we could,” Kunitza said.

In Russia, Humpback whales are listed as a rare and endangered species. Historically affected by commercial whaling, the species today faces a range of human-caused threats such as entanglement in fishing nets, collisions with ships and underwater noise pollution.

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