



ZSL MEDIA RELEASE
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Common dolphin mass stranding investigation

Scientists from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) are leading the investigation into the mass stranding of common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) that occurred around the south Cornwall coastline earlier this week.

Twenty six common dolphins were found dead or died during the course of the mass stranding event. Eleven dolphins have already undergone initial post-mortem examination by ZSL scientists and colleagues at the site of the stranding and a further six dolphins have been transported to ZSL's pathology laboratories for examination, along with samples from the initial investigations. An additional nine individuals have also been examined at the Veterinary Laboratory Agency (Polwhele).

Rob Deaville, Project Manager for the UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme, stated, "At present no conclusions can be made on the cause of the stranding. We are currently undertaking detailed post-mortem examinations on all of the stranded dolphins and will also be conducting a number of further tests. Until the investigation is complete, it is not possible to comment with any confidence on any potential reason/s for the strandings that took place on Monday. ZSL will ensure that complete and comprehensive examinations are undertaken on all of the animals and are grateful to the UK Government who have funded this investigation."

Once all the post-mortem investigations have been concluded and the results analysed, further details will be released.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

- Founded in 1826, the **Zoological Society of London (ZSL)** is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity: our key role is the conservation of animals and their habitats. ZSL owns and operates ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, carries out scientific research at the Institute of Zoology and is actively involved in field conservation in over 40 countries worldwide. www.zsl.org
- The Institute of Zoology (IoZ) is the research division of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) that manages the UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (UKCSIP). IoZ is a government-funded research institute specialising in scientific issues relevant to the conservation of animal species and their habitats.
- The collaborative UKCSIP has been funded by UK government (currently by Defra, Welsh Assembly Government and Scottish Government) since 1990 to investigate strandings and causes of mortality in UK stranded cetaceans and more recently marine turtles. The programme is led by the Zoological Society of London. Scottish Agricultural College, Inverness (SAC), the Natural History Museum (NHM) and Marine Environmental Monitoring (MEM) are partners in the CSIP undertaking work in specific regions of the UK.
- The initial post-mortem work on the stranded dolphins is being undertaken by the Zoological Society of London and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (Polwhele). On-the-ground logistical support at the stranding site was provided by Marine Environmental Monitoring Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) and British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR). Historical data and geographical coordinates were provided by the Natural History Museum.