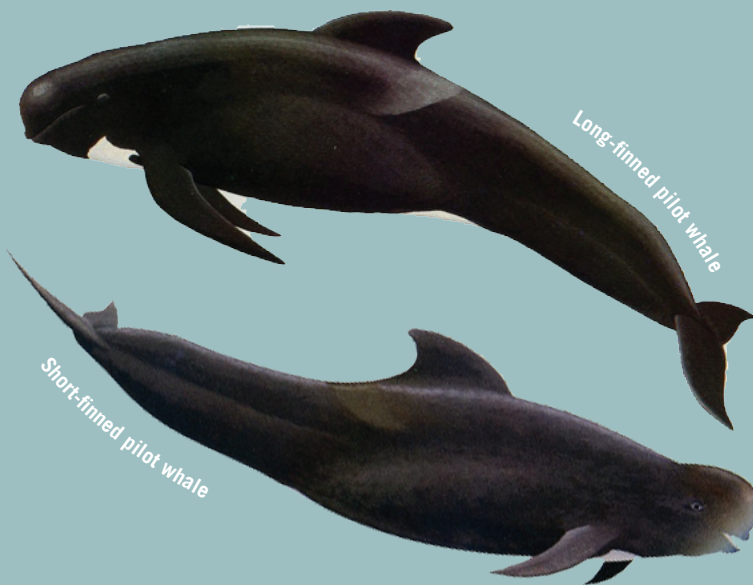


### Pilot Whales

There are two species of pilot whales:

**Long-finned: *Globicephala melas***  
(Latin *globus*=world, Greek *kephala*=head and  
Greek *melas*=black)

**Short-finned: *Globicephala macrorhynchus***



Pilot whales are among the most familiar whales because of their global distribution – the long-finned ones in the colder waters and the short-finned ones in more tropical waters.

They have a tendency to come ashore and strand in large numbers.

The name “pilot whale” refers to the belief (unproven) that a single member of a pod pilots the group, and that the others continue to follow, even when it means certain death.

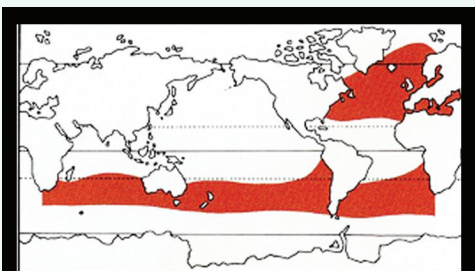
In February of this year some 200 pilot whales stranded at Farewell Spit at the top of the South Island (NZ) Despite efforts by the Department of Conservation (DoC), local people and Project Jonah members a large number died.



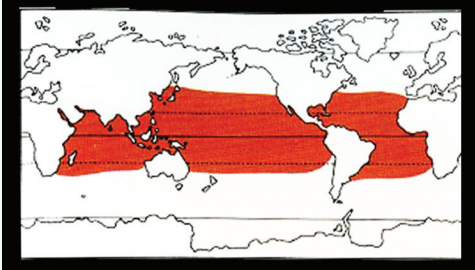
DoC spokesperson Andrew Lamason stated that *“the cause of strandings remained a mystery... it was plausible pilot whales’ echo-location was not well-suited to shallow, gently sloping waters as they usually preferred steep areas such as continental shelf edges. Another theory points to pilot whales’ highly sociable behaviour - when one whale loses its way and strands, its pod mates may swim to its aid.”*

The life span of pilot whales tends to be between 45 years for males and 62 years for females. Overall length is 6.3 meters for males and 5 meters for females with the short-finned whale slightly larger than the long-finned species. Commercial whalers referred to pilot whales as “blackfish”.

They feed mainly on squid and fish such as mackerel.



TOP: This map shows the cooler waters where the long-finned pilot whales are found.



BOTTOM: This map shows the tropical waters where short-finned pilot whales live.

For more interesting information on whales check out our website: [aworldwithwhales.com/](http://aworldwithwhales.com/) [whale-kids](http://whale-kids)

SAVING THE  
**WHALE**  
MEANS SAVING  
ITS HISTORY