

# MailOnline

## Extra-powerful military sonar 'is killing Britain's last wild dolphins'

By [David Derbyshire](#)

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Conservationists fear a major naval exercise due to start today will put Britain's wild dolphins in danger.

They say the latest generation of military sonar being used in the Nato exercise threatens the North Sea's last remaining bottlenose dolphins.

The warning from the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society comes after an unusually high number of deep sea whales have been stranded or spotted in shallow waters around the coast.



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**Naval exercises will threaten bottlenose dolphins in the Moray Firth (pictured), according to wildlife campaigners who say the animals will deafened by the sonar**

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Experts have long feared whales and dolphins are being deafened by the noise from shipping, drilling and underwater sonic alarms designed to keep seals from fish farms.

But they believe the problem is being exacerbated by the powerful new military sonar.

The Nato exercise Joint Warrior involves 20 warships, four submarines and 40 aircraft from nine countries in the Moray Firth, Scotland, and lasts for two weeks.

Sarah Dolman, of the WDCS, said: 'The exercise will use new generation powerful sonar, which is a very loud noise source and we are extremely concerned that the dolphins in the Moray Firth will not be adequately protected by the mitigation measure proposed.'

'The recent deaths of common dolphins, such as the strandings that followed a military exercise off the Cornish coast last year, illustrate how vulnerable dolphins may be.

'Society wouldn't condone exposing people to the equivalent, extreme levels of noise so why should it be acceptable to risk the health of vulnerable dolphins in such a way?'

Around 130 bottlenose dolphins live in the Moray Firth. Another colony is found in Cardigan Bay, Wales while small numbers live in the Hebrides.

The WDCS says the sonar and engine noise from ships and submarines interferes with the natural sonar used by dolphins to hunt and communicate.

Fears over the impact of noise on marine life were raised at the weekend when another northern bottlenose whale was washed up dead on a beach in Prestatyn, North Wales.

It was the tenth northern bottlenose whale to find itself in shallow coastal waters this year.

Last week, another of the 33ft whales was found dead after being rescued from a small Scottish loch.

Mark Simmonds, also of the WDCS, said the number of whales being encountered on the coast this year

was unusual. 'There is an enormous amount of man-made noise out at sea off the northwest of Scotland and we can't rule out that this is what is causing them to come ashore.'

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Looks like they are systematically going round the country killing off all the populations of cetacean mammals to me. Any betting the next naval exercise will be held where another large population of dolphins or whales are resident near the UK coast.

- Stephen, St. Ives, England, 13/10/2009 14:20

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please hurry and kill off all wild life but stupid barking dogs and them the stupid human race will be happy

- L.A.Johnson, U.K, 13/10/2009 12:13

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I dont see any the point of these Nato exercises being carried out in times of relative peace & tranquility in Europe, or even if it is necessary to do so, the powerful military sonar exercises should be carried out far way in parts of the ocean where dolphins & whales are not frequents.

We have seen, earlier this year, how deadly can the new generation powerful sonar could be. More than 200 whales and 50 dolphins got stranded in the shallows and died soon after similar excercise were carried out in Australia. Even though some

were saved, this shows the impact of sonar noise on marine life and most importantly to one of the most intelligent animal in nature.

- Jamalo, Middlesex, 13/10/2009 11:32

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- Jamalo, Middlesex, 13/10/2009 11:28

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- Jamalo, Middlesex, 13/10/2009 11:12

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- Jamalo, Middlesex, 13/10/2009 10:54

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