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London whale died from dehydration

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26 January, 2006

THE ARTICLE

London whale died from dehydration

An autopsy on the northern bottle-nosed whale that died in London's River Thames has determined that the creature died from dehydration. The six-meter long creature captured the world's attention when it was spotted swimming up London's famous river late last week. Despite concerted efforts at rescuing the adolescent whale that cost over \$100,000, it died of convulsions on Sunday. Rescue teams were frantic in their efforts to turn the whale around and head it in the direction of its natural habitat, the Atlantic Ocean. Throughout the rescue attempts, veterinarians were constantly pessimistic about the whale's chances of survival. It had gashed its head on the underside of a boat and had probably suffered eye and lung damage in the fresh water.

The stray whale galvanized the attention of the whole of Britain and made the headlines in many newspapers around the world. It virtually swam all the way through London and is the farthest such a sizeable creature has ventured up the River Thames. The noise from river craft on the busy and often congested waterway probably intensified the stress it felt and further added to its sense of disorientation. The bottle-nosed whale, one of the world's deepest diving mammals, usually swims with its family. Whale specialists have been speculating why it was so far from its natural environment. Some say it was very ill and chose to swim in shallower waters; others say it had veered from its traditional habitat after chasing food and getting lost.

WARM-UPS

1. I'M LOST: You are lost in life. Write down three reasons why. In pairs / groups, talk about the reasons you are lost. Change partners and report on what you heard from you previous partners.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Autopsies / whales / London / River Thames / world's attention / \$100,000 / rescue / being pessimistic / fresh water / headlines / river craft / stress / being ill / lost

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. PREDICTION: Talk with your partner(s) about what you think the article will be about. Use the words in the "chat" section above to help you. Change partners and share and compare your predictions.

4. RESCUE ATTEMPTS: With your partner(s), talk about the following kinds of rescue attempts. How interested are you in following news of each? Have you heard about any of these stories recently? What would you do if you were in need of rescue in each situation?

- a. Animals venturing into unfamiliar habitats
- b. Miners in mines
- c. Submariners in submarines
- d. Earthquake victims
- e. Hurricane victims
- f. Transportation accidents
- g. Cats up trees
- h. Kidnappings

5. RESCUE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "rescue". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. GETTING LOST: In pairs / groups, talk about the times you have got lost. What would you do if you got lost in the following places?

- a. In the jungle
- b. At sea
- c. In a big city in another country
- d. In the desert
- e. In the mountains
- f. At an airport

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. A stray whale died due to a lack of water. T / F
- b. It cost more than a million dollars to try and rescue the whale. T / F
- c. The lost whale's natural environment is the Pacific Ocean. T / F
- d. Whales suffer no ill consequences for swimming in fresh water. T / F
- e. The whale made the headlines only in a few local London newspapers. T / F
- f. Whales often swim right the way through London. T / F
- g. Noise from the whale caused stress to London's boat owners. T / F
- h. A specialist said the whale was being chased by a hungrier whale. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| a. autopsy | desperate |
| b. concerted | pretty much |
| c. frantic | deviated |
| d. pessimistic | journeyed |
| e. gashed | confusion |
| f. virtually | strenuous |
| g. ventured | gloomy |
| h. congested | postmortem |
| i. disorientation | clogged |
| j. veered | lacerated |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. An autopsy on the northern | efforts to turn the whale around |
| b. The six-meter long creature | deepest diving mammals |
| c. Rescue teams were frantic in their | underside of a boat |
| d. constantly pessimistic about the | bottle-nosed whale |
| e. It had gashed its head on the | and often congested waterway |
| f. The stray whale galvanized the | creature has ever ventured |
| g. the farthest such a sizeable | from its traditional habitat |
| h. noise from river craft on the busy | captured the world's attention |
| i. one of the world's | whale's chances of survival |
| j. it had veered | attention of the whole of Britain |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

London whale died from dehydration

An _____ on the northern bottle-nosed whale that died in London's River Thames has _____ that the creature died from dehydration. The six-meter long creature _____ the world's attention when it was spotted swimming up London's famous river late last week. Despite _____ efforts at rescuing the adolescent whale that cost over \$100,000, it died of convulsions on Sunday. Rescue teams were _____ in their efforts to turn the whale around and _____ it in the direction of its natural habitat, the Atlantic Ocean. Throughout the rescue attempts, veterinarians were _____ pessimistic about the whale's chances of survival. It had gashed its head on the _____ of a boat and had probably suffered eye and lung damage in the fresh water.

frantic
captured
constantly
autopsy
underside
concerted
determined
head

The stray whale _____ the attention of the whole of Britain and made the headlines in many newspapers around the world. It _____ swam all the way through London and is the farthest such a sizeable creature has _____ up the River Thames. The noise from river craft on the busy and often congested _____ probably intensified the stress it felt and further added to its _____ of disorientation. The bottle-nosed whale, one of the world's deepest _____ mammals, usually swims with its family. Whale specialists have been speculating why it was so far from its _____ environment. Some say it was very ill and chose to swim in shallower waters; others say it had _____ from its traditional habitat after chasing food and getting lost.

virtually
diving
galvanized
waterway
veered
ventured
natural
sense

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

London whale died from dehydration

An _____ on the northern bottle-nosed whale that died in London's River Thames has _____ that the creature died from dehydration. The six-meter long creature _____ the world's attention when it was spotted swimming up London's famous river late last week. Despite _____ efforts at rescuing the adolescent whale that cost over \$100,000, it died of convulsions on Sunday. Rescue teams were _____ in their efforts to turn the whale around and head it in the direction of its natural habitat, the Atlantic Ocean. Throughout the rescue attempts, veterinarians were constantly _____ about the whale's chances of survival. It had _____ its head on the underside of a boat and had probably suffered eye and lung damage in the fresh water.

The stray whale _____ the attention of the whole of Britain and made the headlines in many newspapers around the world. It virtually swam all the way through London and is the farthest such a _____ creature has ventured up the River Thames. The noise from river craft on the busy and often _____ waterway probably intensified the stress it felt and further added to its sense of _____. The bottle-nosed whale, one of the world's deepest diving _____, usually swims with its family. Whale specialists have been speculating why it was so far from its natural environment. Some say it was very ill and chose to swim in _____ waters; others say it had _____ from its traditional habitat after chasing food and getting lost.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'bottle' and 'nose'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "LOST" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about getting lost and rescue efforts.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| • determined | • galvanized |
| • captured | • virtually |
| • adolescent | • sizeable |
| • head | • sense |
| • constantly | • diving |
| • underside | • waters |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. How often do you get lost?
- c. Did you follow the news of this whale?
- d. Are you surprised that the rescuers couldn't save the whale's life?
- e. Do you think so much money should have been spent on rescuing the whale?
- f. What do you think the rescuers could have done to increase the whale's chances of survival?
- g. Have you ever been dehydrated or thought you were close to dehydration?
- h. Are you more pessimistic than optimistic when you see rescue efforts in progress?
- i. Do you always follow the news of rescue efforts of disasters or manmade calamities?
- j. What adjectives describe your feelings about this article?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you now about whales?
- d. Why do you think the whale tried to venture up the River Thames?
- e. Which do you prefer reading, this kind of news or news about politics and wars?
- f. Has an animal ever galvanized the attention of the people in your town?
- g. Would you have given money to save the stricken whale?
- h. Have you ever been totally disorientated?
- i. What do you do when you find yourself outside of your natural habitat?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on bottle-nosed whales. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. GETTING LOST: Write an essay about a time you got very lost. How did you feel? Read your essay to your partner(s) in your next class. Did you all write about similar things?

4. A DAY IN THE LIFE: You are a whale. Write an account of one day in your life. What are your thoughts on what is happening in the world today? Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone have similar days and thoughts?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. F e. F f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| a. autopsy | postmortem |
| b. concerted | strenuous |
| c. frantic | desperate |
| d. pessimistic | gloomy |
| e. gashed | lacerated |
| f. virtually | pretty much |
| g. ventured | journeyed |
| h. congested | clogged |
| i. disorientation | confusion |
| j. veered | deviated |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. An autopsy on the northern | bottle-nosed whale |
| b. The six-meter long creature | captured the world's attention |
| c. Rescue teams were frantic in their | efforts to turn the whale around |
| d. constantly pessimistic about the | whale's chances of survival |
| e. It had gashed its head on the | underside of a boat |
| f. The stray whale galvanized the | attention of the whole of Britain |
| g. the farthest such a sizeable | creature has ever ventured |
| h. noise from river craft on the busy | and often congested waterway |
| i. one of the world's | deepest diving mammals |
| j. it had veered | from its traditional habitat |

GAP FILL:

London whale died from dehydration

An **autopsy** on the northern bottle-nosed whale that died in London's River Thames has **determined** that the creature died from dehydration. The six-meter long creature **captured** the world's attention when it was spotted swimming up London's famous river late last week. Despite **concerted** efforts at rescuing the adolescent whale that cost over \$100,000, it died of convulsions on Sunday. Rescue teams were **frantic** in their efforts to turn the whale around and **head** it in the direction of its natural habitat, the Atlantic Ocean. Throughout the rescue attempts, veterinarians were **constantly** pessimistic about the whale's chances of survival. It had gashed its head on the **underside** of a boat and had probably suffered eye and lung damage in the fresh water.

The stray whale **galvanized** the attention of the whole of Britain and made the headlines in many newspapers around the world. It **virtually** swam all the way through London and is the farthest such a sizeable creature has **ventured** up the River Thames. The noise from river craft on the busy and often congested **waterway** probably intensified the stress it felt and further added to its **sense** of disorientation. The bottle-nosed whale, one of the world's deepest **diving** mammals, usually swims with its family. Whale specialists have been speculating why it was so far from its **natural** environment. Some say it was very ill and chose to swim in shallower waters; others say it had **veered** from its traditional habitat after chasing food and getting lost.