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Navy accepts blame for whale deaths

12 January 2002 by [Jeff Hecht](#)
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THE US Navy has admitted for the first time that the sonar used by its ships can injure whales and dolphins.

In a joint report issued last month with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Navy has accepted that its sonar caused the beaching of 16 whales in the northern Bahamas in March 2000. But it maintains that the whales were the victims of unusual circumstance. It says the animals were swimming in the confined waters of the Providence Channel, which uniquely concentrated a range of sonar sounds used in training exercises in the area.

All the dead animals autopsied after the Navy exercises "had experienced some sort of trauma likely to be associated with pressure, an intense acoustic event, or an impulse, that led to their stranding and subsequent deaths", says the report. Signed by Navy Secretary Gordon England, it says Navy sonars operating at frequencies of 1 to ...

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