

Freya the walrus euthanised after troubling crowds in Oslo fjord

Young 600kg female had been basking in waters of Norway's capital and attracting crowds who disturbed her rest



Freya resting on a boat in Frognerkilen, Oslo fjord, in July. Norwegian officials decided to euthanise after evaluating a 'persistent threat to human security'. Photograph: Tor Erik Schröder/NTB/AFP/Getty Images

Agence France-Presse

Sun 14 Aug 2022 13:47 BST


A walrus nicknamed Freya that attracted crowds while basking in the sun in the Oslo fjord has been euthanised.

“The decision to euthanise was taken on the basis of a global evaluation of the persistent threat to human security,” the head of Norway’s fisheries directorate, Frank Bakke-Jensen, said in a statement.

“We carefully examined all the possible solutions. We concluded that we could not guarantee the wellbeing of the animal by any of the means available,” he said.

Officials had previously said they were considering euthanasia because repeated appeals to the public to keep their distance from the young female weighing 600kg (1,300lb) had been in vain.

Freya, whose name was a reference to the Norse goddess of beauty and love, had been making headlines since 17 July when she was first spotted in the waters of the Norwegian capital.

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Walruses normally live in the even more northerly latitudes of the Arctic.

Between long naps - a walrus can sleep up to 20 hours a day - Freya was filmed chasing a duck, attacking a swan and, more often than not, dozing on boats struggling to support her bulk.

Despite repeated appeals, curious onlookers continued to approach her, sometimes with children in tow, to take photographs.

Freya had already been sighted in the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden and chose to spend part of the summer in Norway.

Freya first gained notoriety in Norway by climbing on to pleasure boats in Kragerø, an idyllic southern coastal village.

The walrus is a protected species that feeds mainly on invertebrates such as molluscs, shrimps, crabs and small fish.