

# Death of a Whale

Science, Environment

EMC 1995

**Science SOL: 5.6, 6.11, LS.12, BIO.5**

6 16-27 minute programs for grades 4-9

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In December, 1992, a 28-foot sperm whale washed ashore at Wrightsville Beach, N.C. The young emaciated female marine mammal soon died in the surf. When veterinarians and biologists performed a necropsy, they found the whale's belly full of marine debris: 30 feet of nylon rope, a plastic gallon-size bleach bottle, a plastic bag, a large blob of raw latex, and a fishing float. Veterinarians believe the whale starved to death because it couldn't get enough "real" food into its stomach due to the volume of indigestibles.

### **Single Episode:**

Using the story of a whale's unusual and untimely death as an unforgettable lesson about the dangers of marine debris, this program examines why the whale died and the implications of its death for the health of our marine environment. Footage of the actual incident is alternated with interviews of various professionals: a veterinarian, husbandry curator, and more.

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