



**STRANDED NO MORE**

strandednomore.org

**Pre-registered external standard for the necropsy of the juvenile humpback whale at the Kirchsee, Insel Poel**

*Issued 13 April 2026, while the animal is still alive and before any necropsy has been announced or performed. This document is published in advance deliberately, so that the questions it raises serve as an external standard against which the subsequent necropsy report can be evaluated by any reader comparing the two documents.*

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**The necropsy will be the single most consequential document produced in this case.** It will determine whether the ministry's framing of the animal as gravely ill and beyond rescue survives the next decade of scrutiny or collapses under it. Stranded No More issues this short statement now, before the necropsy is performed, to place four conditions on the public record.

**First, on independence.** The authors of the DMM/ITAW Gutachten of 7 April 2026 must not perform or supervise the necropsy of the same animal. A necropsy performed by the same institutional network that produced the prognosis is institutional self-review, not independent verification. The standard practice in every other professional field, from medicine to aviation to research misconduct, is that the reviewer of an outcome cannot be the author of the decision that produced the outcome. The necropsy must be performed by a veterinary pathology team with no operational involvement in this case, no co-authorship history with Prof. Dr. Ursula Siebert, Dr. Stephanie Groß, or Prof. Dr. Burkard Baschek, and no institutional affiliation with DMM Stralsund, ITAW Hannover, IWC SEP, or BDMLR. The exclusion must also extend to any expert, consultant, or advisor who has contributed to the handling of this case but whose identity has not yet been publicly disclosed. Any such previously undisclosed advisor who is subsequently named as a member of the necropsy team must be understood as a party who participated in the decision the necropsy is supposed to evaluate, and their participation would convert the necropsy from an independent verification into a continuation of the same institutional process. Tissue samples must be archived and made available to qualified external researchers on formal request.

**Second, on what the necropsy must distinguish.** Any competent post-mortem must separate three categories of pathological findings: **(a)** pre-existing chronic conditions present before 23 March 2026 that would have been incompatible with survival regardless of intervention, **(b)** acute conditions resulting directly from the prolonged stranding itself, and **(c)** conditions resulting from the denial of rescue and the inconsistency of supportive care between 31 March and the date of death. These three categories have different implications and must not be collapsed. A finding of tissue damage consistent with prolonged pressure on the substrate, with hypothermia or starvation, with dehydration, with skin breakdown from repeated brackish-water immersion without relief, or with acoustic stress from the 11 April playback procedure, is not evidence of pre-existing terminal disease. It is evidence of what neglect does to a live animal over time. The distinction is clinically standard and must be made explicitly in the report.

**Third, on consistency with the contemporaneous record.** The necropsy cannot contradict what was publicly and continuously observed. The animal was documented on the News5 livestream, in the Bild liveticker, and in the 10 April interview given by Minister Backhaus himself as vocalizing, breathing, responding to stimulus, raising his head, and moving his pectoral fins and tail fluke rhythmically, including coordinated forward movement of three to four meters under his own power on the nights of 8 and 9 April. A necropsy report that claims paralysis,

that claims advanced neurological failure, that claims terminal respiratory collapse in the week before death, or that otherwise asserts findings incompatible with the observed behavioural record, will be contradicting the public documentary record, not Stranded No More. The observable record exists in video form and cannot be retroactively adjusted. Any finding in the necropsy must be reconcilable with what the animal was seen to do, by name and by date, in the days before death.

**Fourth, on the pulmonary edema claim of 13 April.** Press release No. 109/2026 of 13 April 2026 introduced a specific clinical claim, that "water is accumulating in the whale's lungs," attributed to the ministry's scientific advisors. This claim was made without any diagnostic procedure capable of establishing pulmonary edema in a live large whale, and is therefore a prediction rather than a finding. The necropsy must address this claim directly and must report whether pulmonary findings are consistent with, inconsistent with, or insufficient to support the pre-mortem prediction. A necropsy that reports pulmonary edema without specifying the diagnostic basis on which it was pre-predicted, or that omits the question entirely, will be treated by Stranded No More as documentary evidence that the 13 April framing was a rhetorical instrument rather than a clinical observation.

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Stranded No More commits, in this document, to evaluating the eventual necropsy report against these four conditions. The evaluation will be published regardless of whether the findings are favorable or unfavorable to Stranded No More's own position. The purpose of this pre-registration is not to anticipate the findings. It is to establish, in advance of the event and on the public record, the external standard against which the findings will be measured. Every reader who encounters both documents at any point in the future will be able to check the date on this one and confirm that its questions were not written in response to the necropsy, but before it.

**The animal is still alive at the date of this statement.**

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*Stranded No More is an anonymous watchdog group of stranding professionals. [strandednomore.org](http://strandednomore.org)*