A pilot whale has died off southern Thailand after swallowing 80 plastic bags, Thai marine officials say.

The bags, weighing about 8kg (17lbs), had made it impossible for the whale to eat food, a marine expert said.

A recent report warned the amount of plastic in the ocean could triple in a decade unless litter was curbed.

Thailand is a major user of plastic bags and its government last month announced it was considering a levy on them.

Environmental officials used boats to try to help float the whale and erected a sunshade for it. They nursed the whale through the week but it died on Friday afternoon.
Marine biologist Thon Thamrongnawasawat told Agence France-Presse the bags would have made it impossible for the whale to eat nutritional food. "If you have 80 plastic bags in your stomach, you die," he said.