



The 2001 Sea Alarm Conference

The Hague, November 23-24, 2001



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Cover photograph: Shell building, the Hague

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Declaration on cooperation

The following organisations have committed themselves to cooperate internationally within the Sea Alarm Network. They support the decisions taken at the 2001 Conference

- Finnish Environment Institute
- Ecole Nationale Veterinaire de Nantes
- Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux LPO
- Archelon/Sea Turtle Protection Society
- Hellenic Society for the study and Protection of the Monk Seal
- Acquario di Genova Costa Aquarium S.p.A
- Centro Studi Cetacei
- Fügelpits
- Werkgroep Vogelasielen Nederland
- Pieterburen Seal Research and Rehabilitation Centre
- University of Gdansk/Hell Marine Station
- St. Petersburg State University/Baltic Fund for Nature
- Centre de Recuperacio d'Animals Marins de Catalunta
- Gothenburg Birdcentre
- KFV :s Riksförbund
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals
- Istituto Centrale per la Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica Applicata al Mare

Decisions on cooperative work

On the second day of the Conference, Hugo Nijkamp presented a list of decisions that needed to be taken to:

- formally establish the Sea Alarm European Network,
- ensure a democratic and transparent decision making structure, and to
- commit network members (Sea Alarm associates) to the common aims and tasks for the period 2002-2003.

Adoption of the Task Force Report

The Task Force Report¹ was formally adopted as the overall Programme of Action of the Sea Alarm Network. From this programme, a number of priority actions were agreed.

Adopted Priority Actions 2002-2003

Adopted tasks for the Sea Alarm Board / executive staff

- Produce report 2nd Conference which should include a Statement of Co-operation (signed with logo's of the participants)
- Develop communications network : Web site, mailings etc.
- Continue to develop positive links with and receive recognition from industry & governments.
- Co-ordinate fund raising activities (industry, GO's, NGO's, EU).
- Submit proposal to EU on Wildlife Contingency Planning.
- Produce Programme Development (Business Plan)

¹ See Annex 6

- Set up a Database project.
- Set up a Committee of Recommendation.
- Continue the development of The Alliance & ensure communication between Alliance and European organisations.
- Assist member organisations with national activities.

Adopted tasks for each participant of the Sea Alarm Network

- Assist with supplying the database with relevant data.
- Help build, and/or consolidate a national network for oiled wildlife emergency responses / national co-ordination.
- Create goodwill/recognition by national authorities for the common international initiatives.
- Assist fundraising at national levels.

Other decisions

In addition, the following decisions were unanimously taken:

- 1 The Sea Alarm network has clear advantages and puts clear "added value" to the work of all its associated members
- 2 Each associated member recognises the necessity to cooperate as part of the network in order to achieve the common objectives



- 3 Sea Alarm Foundation will take a coordinating and representative role
- 4 The Task Force Report offers an acceptable model for democratic decision making within the network: The Sea Alarm Board runs the day to day business, which is delegated to a Managing Director. Board Membership is open to individual Sea Alarm members (i.e. Marine Wildlife Rehabilitators Organisations throughout Europe) by means of a rotating system. Each year, a Sea Alarm Conference will be held at which an annual report of the year's activities will be presented, new activities are proposed to the Board, and vacancies for Board Membership are announced. This decision making system is accepted for the time being but can be improved at future Conferences.
- 5 There is a need for the Sea Alarm Network to develop a communicative identity, this can be achieved by setting up a database, establishing a list of supporting organisations, and present the organisation on the Internet.
- 6 There is a need to develop operational response systems at national levels.
- 7 There is a need to identify experts who are available for international response actions.
- 8 There is a need to identify experts to assist Alliance activities (2002).
- 9 The list of priority actions must be carried out in 2002.



Introduction

On November 23 and 24, 2001, sixteen organisations from ten European countries gathered in The Hague, The Netherlands to formally establish their international cooperation concerning response preparedness for oil spills that affect marine wildlife.

The meeting was organised by Sea Alarm Foundation, hosted by Shell-NL in their Central Office, with financial support from the Dutch North Sea Directorate² and the Nature Directorate³.

The meeting followed a similar meeting held in Pieterburen (NL) in November 2000 where a group of wildlife response organisations met and the common concern about the threat of accidental marine pollution to marine wildlife was expressed. There it was decided to work together and try to involve industry, governments and NGO's in tackling the problem. That meeting established a Task Force of ten representatives to further explore a common strategy to tackle the threat of a marine oil spill. The Task Force met in Brussels, March 2001, and produced a Strategic Programme of Action.

One of the recommendation of the Task Force was that Sea Alarm Foundation should attempt to bring the community of European oiled wildlife responders together in an annual conference, to monitor and steer progress, and exchange views, visions and experiences. In that way they provide a basis for democratic decision making amongst a large group of organisations.



² Ministry of Transport, Water Management and Public Works

³ Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries

Welcome address

A welcome address was given by Erica Terpstra, Chairperson of the Sea Alarm Foundation, Tim van Kooten, Public Affairs Manager with Shell-NL, and Max de Groot, Director Water Management and Pollution Control Unit, North Sea Directorate (see Annex 1 for summary texts).

Erica Terpstra: "The time has now arrived to really start building the necessary facilities and making cooperation and communication structures effective!"



Tim van Kooten: "Talk to us, we listen. And that is a serious invitation to this group. We will listen to you!"



Max de Groot: Intentions should not be lost in discussions, but steps of action should be taken. The North Sea Directorate is ready to consider how the results of this conference can be incorporated in its work"



Objectives and perspectives⁴

Objectives

The principal aim of the 2001 Conference was to agree upon a common programme of action for the next few years. In particular there was a need to:

- discuss the progress and achievements to date;
- discuss the overall strategy;
- agree on a method for working & decision making;
- formally establish the European network;
- define the role of Sea Alarm Foundation,
- discuss and adopt the recommendations of the Task Force,
- define the priorities of action for the period 2002-2003, and
- give a mandate to Sea Alarm's Board as the executive of the Network

Short overview of activities and results 1999-2001

Sea Alarm Foundation started in 1999 on initiative of SRRC Pieterburen, as catalyst for discussions between oiled wildlife experts, governments and industry, both world-wide and in Europe. Based on the recommendations of a feasibility study (Nijkamp and Lankester, 2000), Sea Alarm advanced the development of two networks, one Worldwide (the International Alliance of Oiled Wildlife Responders) and one in Europe (Sea Alarm Network). In March 2001, the Sea Alarm Board was internationalised and presently has a European representation. This Board appointed a Project Director who operates from a secretariat in Brussels, Belgium. The European Sea Alarm Network was launched during a first Conference in Pieterburen, Netherlands in 2000. A Task Force of ten experts formed during that meeting came together in Brussels, March 2001, and produced a draft Programme of Action. Recommendations from were adopted by the Board, resulting in a Mission Statement, which was printed May 2001.

⁴ This chapter was presented by Hugo Nijkamp

Mission and Objective Sea Alarm Foundation

Sea Alarm's objective is to facilitate and motivate strategic alliances among NGOs, industry and government organisations with a common aim to:

- respond effectively to oil spills and rehabilitate affected wildlife professionally according to international standards,
- to be prepared for an oil spill emergency, as part of the response activity,
- work towards oil spill prevention.

Sea Alarm's mission is to make use of the best professional approaches to oiled wildlife welfare and use the best expertise available and applicable in any oil spill response.

At the moment, the European Sea Alarm Network includes about 35 interested organisations and government agencies in 17 European countries.

At the worldwide level, Sea Alarm Foundation has become one of the founding members of the International Alliance of Oiled Wildlife Responders (The Alliance) of which representatives have met three times (Myrtle Beach, Hastings, Tampa). The Alliance can be considered as the international umbrella organisation at which expertise can be exchanged and made available to local organisations to increase oil spill preparedness and achieve higher professional standards. The Alliance Network includes experts from Europe, US and Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Over the last year, the Sea Alarm Foundation has established valuable contacts with a large number of national agencies, international organisations and key industry players.

Government agencies that have expressed their interest in Sea Alarm's work include agencies

in the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Finland. Also the Civil Protection Unit in DG Environment, which deals with accidental marine pollution, encouraged further development of the network. The IMO-UNEP supported Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), envisages future cooperation with Sea Alarm.

Within Industry, the very valuable contacts with the International Tanker Owner Pollution Federation (ITOPF), the Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL), and IPIECA's Oil Spill Working Group (OSWG) have been continued and intensified. Also a number of individual oil companies have expressed their sympathy and support for Sea Alarm's work, including Shell, BP, and TotalFinaElf.

Perspectives

The long term perspective

The long term perspective of our work should not read only as a set of long term objectives, but also as a product in which governments and industry are more than interested in helping to developing:

- Worldwide expertise (or global knowledge) available for any spill.
- Best Available Techniques applied (veterinary, human safety, management etc.)
- Coordinated professional wildlife responses under control of overall responsible authority
- International database to find "tailor-made" rapid response assistance
- Transparency of wildlife operations, cost-efficiency, monitoring, evaluation

The next few years

In order to work towards these products, the Foundation will have to continue building on its already solid base and take every opportunity to



make progress, especially by identifying and realising strategic projects and activities. It must continue to invite national authorities, industry and scientists to get involved in its activities. This will require efforts at a national level by individual Sea Alarm organisations, but Sea Alarm Foundation can and will assist. One of the priority challenges to be faced as a group is how to set up a rapid response mechanism in Europe: tomorrow there could be a major spill which may require quick international assistance. Sea Alarm should be able to provide this, but this will need further thought and specific information on what exactly the Foundation can offer at this stage. A database, which should contain information about who Sea Alarm is, what are its skills and facilities has to be developed as a priority. This database will form the main source of information for organising any emergency response. In addition, there is a requirement for further discussions on preparedness and response models. These should include how to operate at a spill, how to organise the Network's work in a professional and orderly manner and how communications need to be established with those responsible for the overall spill response. This effectively requires to the production of a handbook on wildlife contingency planning. Such a volume, offering an upfront structure for cooperation between national agencies, industry and members of the European Sea Alarm Network, should include guidelines how to operate the wildlife response as part of a major operation (see Annex 3). Associated with the handbook are

the minimum veterinary standards of animal care that are required, also a “code of conduct” to which all members of the Network subscribe while the scene, and which includes the *do's and the don't's* of the common response activities. Finally, the Foundation has to develop a system of qualification for its members - a set of minimum standards for those groups that are active within a coordinated spill response. Once these standards are set, training facilities, to ensure that anyone interested has the possibility to attain the qualification standards need to be developed. . Such minimum standards could

be used by authorities as a criteria to accredit organisations for the response work at national and international levels.

Realisation

In consideration of all these objectives and perspectives, members of the Network need to be pro-active and mobilise to make the necessary changes. Others, governments and industry, will certainly follow. The Sea Alarm signal has already has been heard and accepted . It is time to act now.

Work on the Alliance⁵

The Alliance - a history

The Alliance of Oiled Wildlife Responders (“The Alliance”), is an informal group of oiled animal rehabilitators with representation from different continents, the USA, Europe, South Africa and Australia/New Zealand. These rehabilitators have been meeting informally, and growing in number, for about ten years. Discussions have been focussing on the need to exchange methods and experiences on a worldwide level, in order to be able to bring lessons learned from past oiled wildlife contingencies into practice. Sea Alarm Foundation has played a catalyst role in establishing The Alliance by presenting its feasibility study at the *Effects on Oiled Wildlife Conference* in Myrtle Beach (USA) in March 2000. It demonstrated that international cooperation would be feasible and have clear added value. Following that same Conference, a one-day meeting was held in Myrtle Beach, in which those who were present decided to call itself a coalition and to start working towards a more formal organisation.

Two further meetings have been held. In Hastings (UK, November 2000), the group decided to start comparing methodology and



developing standards of good practice. The name “the Alliance of Oiled Wildlife Responders” for the group was adopted. A third meeting was held in Tampa (USA, March 2001). There, first draft texts for common protocols were discussed. Also it was decided to formally establish The Alliance as

⁵ Presentation by Tim Thomas (RSPCA, founder “member” Alliance, Board Member Sea Alarm)

an organisation. From the group, fourteen persons were elected to form an Intermediate Board of Directors. They took the task to develop and adopt a number of rules for its formal establishment. Establishment of the Alliance will probably take place in Europe (Belgium) this year. Before that, the Intermediate Board of Directors will meet in Southampton (UK), April 11-13.

What will it do?

From the objectives expressed during the previous meetings, “The Alliance” can be expected to: provide internationally agreed standards of practice to and for oil spill responders; be a point of reference to national authorities who may not have national “teams” of their own; set minimum and regularly reviewed standards so that industry can be assured of the highest standard of response; provide support (eg, manpower, equipment, back-up) to national teams in times of high crisis; consolidate up-to-date research.

Firstly, however,, the Alliance must establish its own organisation . To date, the group has been “open ended” and rules for membership have not been set. Also, there are no formal meeting reports published and no official documents, e.g. on mission or objectives exist. Therefore, the meeting

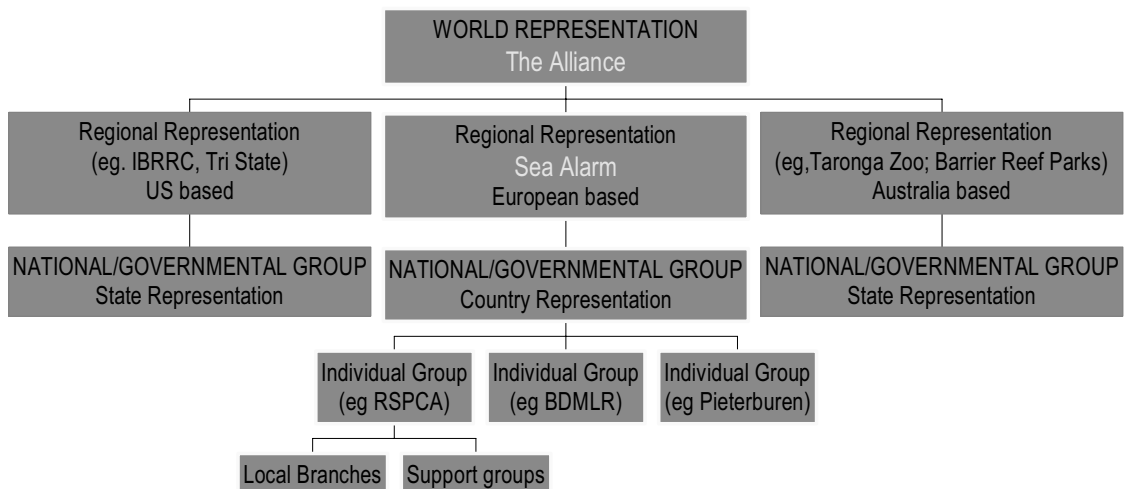
of the Intermediate Board of Directors will be an important one for the future of the initiative.

Where does everyone fit in?

Because the discussion on organisation structure of the Alliance is still pending, there is no model agreed. Within the European community of oiled wildlife responders, some ideas have been exchanged at Sea Alarm’s Task Force meeting in Brussels, March this year. There, a model was discussed in which The Alliance would be a worldwide umbrella organisation supported by regional organisations such as Sea Alarm and similar organisations in other continents. In that model, The Alliance would be the world representation of oiled wildlife rehabilitators. Matters of world relevance (e.g. development of professional standard methods, representation to global industry and governmental organisations, contact point for oiled wildlife advice and assistance) should be covered by that organisation. Any matter of regional relevance should be covered by the regional representation, and matters of national relevance by the individual organisations. This model is illustrated by the following chart:

What is there to do?

Chart Title



In terms of activities for the next few years, the following (tasks could be proposed):

The Alliance

- Prepare Internationally agreed standards of oiled wildlife response practice
- Have primary access to international response groups.
- Create a wide knowledge base

Sea Alarm

- Prepare regional protocols applicable to region - The EU.
- Create a centre for regional response co-ordination
- Create a regional knowledge base

However, it must be remembered that both the Alliance and Sea Alarm are co-ordinating bodies only. There, therefore, should be a presumption against producing narrow principles and detailed “blue prints” for response activities. This would be an impractical strategy, because many methodologies and principles are possible

and needed because of cultural differences, variability amongst environments, species and legislation, etc. Rather, the principles should developed through each level getting more and more specific and relevant to each individual circumstance and situation.

Your input

The intermediate Board of the Alliance will meet in April this year. There, formal “membership” terms are to be discussed and agreed. Hugo will represent Sea Alarm, and through him, you can have your inputs in the discussions.

Later this year, it is expected that there will be a further meeting of the Alliance where new drafts of response methodology will be discussed. Sea Alarm Foundation should try to assist those of you who are interested in that meeting to get invited. If you have any further questions then please contact either me (Tim), Hugo, Jim or Gerry.

An industry perspective⁶

ITOPF

First Kathi Stanzel introduced the International Tanker Owner Pollution Federation. ITOPF arrives at the site of a spill, to respond on behalf of its members, the P&I Clubs (the insurer companies) and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund. Its role is to advise and assist all parties on most effective clean-up to minimise resource damage, offer guidance on likely admissibility of claims (reasonableness), and monitor events, clean-up activities and investigate damage to coastal resources. Apart from that, ITOPF provides a large number of technical services, e.g. damage assessment and claim analysis, contingency planning and advices



⁶ Summary of a presentation by Katherina Stanzel, International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation

training, contributions to seminars and conferences, Information services, publications and databases. Its web site (www.itopf.com) provides information and is a useful guide into the world of oil spill response. Also she referred to the ITOPF Handbook which contains a lot of background information.

Marine pollution and “industry”

In reaction to discussions during the Conference, Kathi Stanzel gave some figures on oil inputs into the marine environment which demonstrated a wide array of pollution sources. She also demonstrated that under the umbrella of “Industry”, many separate branches are united, including e.g. oil and gas companies, ship owners, ship charterers, cargo owners, insurer companies. But unfortunately there is no single organisation that represents “industry” as a whole. Neither can “industry” as a whole be held responsible for a single event such as an oil spill.

Liability and compensation

In her explanation of liability and compensation schemes Kathi Stanzel demonstrated that a claim for oiled wildlife response is far from chanceless. Central in the justification of a claim is the

question whether or not the response activity can be called “reasonable”. In the past there are quite a few examples in which the costs of wildlife responses have been compensated because it was clear that the activities could be technically justified.

Oiled wildlife response

Kathi Stanzel said she was pleased with the constructive approach Sea Alarm has taken, i.e. to develop forms of cooperation between industry groups, government agencies and act on pre-spill arrangements. This approach has been supported by ITOPF from the beginning. Its strength is to find ways to plan and exercise before an emergency arises. Priorities for effective response are contingency planning and to act on lessons learnt. Any wildlife response should be integrated with an overall response. Therefore integration with National Contingency Plans and cooperation with those government bodies in charge of the overall spill response should be established. As far as priorities for effective response are concerned, first priority should be structures, organisation and knowledge. Second priority should be equipment, supplies etc. Kathi Stanzel concluded that both Sea Alarm and the Alliance have taken very promising steps so far and that she would continue to follow further developments with a lot of interest.

Work of European Wildlife rehabilitators

By means of “five minutes presentations”, all participants took the opportunity to present their respective working field, aims and facilities. The presentations (see annex 4) demonstrated the professional standards for the rehabilitation of marine birds and mammals throughout Europe.

Work programme discussions

Animated by the chairman, Mr Antonio Di Natale, discussions took place on a number of



topics, with reference to identifying a programme of action and a work programme for 2002/2003 (see Annex 5).

Acknowledgements

The Sea Alarm 2001 Conference has been a success. Without the contributions of the following organisations and people this would not have been possible:

Shell-NL offered the conference facilities of their Central Office in The Hague. They hosted the meeting and provided coffee, tea, lunches and a reception. Also they provided their hotel booking services, and a reduced hotel rate. Many thanks are due to **Tim van Kooten** who made that possible.

The **North Sea Directorate** and the **Nature Directorate** expressed a lot of interest in the work of Sea Alarm and were keen to fund the conference. The **Seal Research and Rehabilitation Centre**, Pieterburen initiated Sea Alarm years ago, and has continued to support its activities. **Lenie 't Hart** kindly offered in kind assistance to the organisation of the Conference and will support the production and printing of the report. **Simone Schuls** of the Centre has put a lot of effort in the organisation of the conference and was of great assistance. **Karst van der Meulen** did the lay out of the report and coordinated the printing process. **Jim Conroy** is acknowledged for improving the English.

Brussels, December
Hugo Nijkamp

Annexes:

- Annex 1: List of participants
- Annex 2: Summaries of welcome Addresses
- Annex 3: Model wildlife contingency planning
- Annex 4: Summaries of 5-minutes presentations
- Annex 5: Work programme discussions
- Annex 6: Contents of the Task Force Report

Annex 1. List of participants

Timo Asanti
Finnish Environment Institute
P.O. Box 140
Fin-00251 Helsinki
Finland
358 40300 720
358 40300 791
timo.asanti@vyh.fi

Emmanuel Risi
Ecole Nationale Veterinaire de Nantes,
Unité de Parasitologie,
Dpt Pathologie Générale
Atlanpôle, La Chantrerie, BP 40706
44307 Nantes Cedex 3
France
33.2.40.68.76.97
risi@vet-nantes.fr

Laurent Brucy
LPO
La Corderie Royale-BP263
17305 Rochefort cedex
France
33 546821234
33 546821250
laurent.brucy@lpo-birdlife.asso.fr

Belalides, Thanos (future contact: Aliko Panagopoulou)
Archelon/Sea Turtle Protection Society
57, Solomou Str.
10432 Athens
Greece
30.1.5231342
30.1.5231342
rescue@archelon.gr

Eugenia (Jeny) Androukaki
MOM/Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of
the Monk Seal
18, Solomou street
GR – 10682 Athens
Greece
30.10.5222888
30 10.5222450
rescue@mom.gr

Antonio Di Natale
Acquario di Genova Costa Aquarium S.p.A.
Area Porto Antico, Ponte Spinola
16128 Genova
Italy
39 010 23 45 221
39 010 25 61 601
adinatale@acquariodigenova.it

Giulia Mo
ICRAM
Via di Casalotti 300
00166 Roma
Italy
39 06 615701
39 06 61561906
mogiulia@tin.it

Dick Jongman
Fugelpits
De Singel 34
9133 NJ Anjum
Netherlands
31 519321903
31 519321591
t.b.jongman@chello.nl

Marcel Bertsch
IFAW Netherlands
Bezuidenhoutseweg 225
2594 AL The Hague
Netherlands
31 70 3355011
31 70 3850940
mbertsch@ifaw.org

Erica Terpstra
Sea Alarm Foundation
Quai aux Briques 22
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
32.2.5032590
32.2.5027438
e.terpstra@tk.parlement.nl

Gerry Dorrestein
Utrecht University Fac. Veterinary Medicine
Yalelaan 1 De Uithof
3584 CL Utrecht
Netherlands
31302534357
31302533131
g.m.dorrestein@vet.uu.nl

Lenie 't Hart
 Zeehondencrèche Pieterburen
 Hoofdstraat 94a
 9968 AG Pieterburen
 Netherlands
 31 595 526526
 31 595 528389
 lenie.pieterburen.seals@wxs.nl

Monika Rolinska
 University of Gdansk Hell Marine Station
 PO Box 37 C 84
 150 Hell
 Poland
 48 58750836
 48 58750420
 auroлка@hotmail.com

Roustam Sagitov
 St. Petersburg State University (Baltic Fund for Nature)
 Univeritetskayd emb.7/9
 St. Petersburg
 Russia
 7 812 3289620
 7 812 3289620
 sagitov@zool.bio.pup.ru

Mr. Gaya
 CRAMC- Centre de Recuperacio d' Animals Marins de
 Catalunya
 Camí Ral, Premià de Mar 239
 08330 Barcelona
 Spain
 34 937524581
 34 937525710
 cram@lix.intercom.es

Åsa Rydén
 Gothenburg Birdcentre
 Tullare Hög 50
 S-442 90 Kungälv
 Sweden
 birdcenter@swipnet.se

Jan Hillarp
 KfV:s Riksförbund
 Matrosgången
 S – 23931 Skanör
 Sweden
 4640472369
 jan.hillarp@zeta.telenordia.se

Tim Thomas
 RSPCA
 Causeway, Horsam
 West Sussex RH12 1HG
 UK
 44 1403264181
 44 1403218042
 tthomas@rspca.org.uk

Jim Conroy (written contribution, not present)
 Celtic Environment
 10 Old Mart Road
 Torphins
 Aberdeenshire
 AB314JG Scotland
 44 1339882568
 United Kingdom

Kathy Stanzel
 ITOPF
 Staple Hall
 Stonehouse Court
 87-90 Houndsditch
 London EC3A 7AX
 United Kingdom
 44.2076211255
 44.2076211783
 katharinastanzel@itopf.com

Hugo Nijkamp
 Sea Alarm Foundation
 Quai aux Briques 22
 1000 Brussels
 Belgium
 32 25032590
 32 25027438
 nijkamp@argo-onda.com

Tim van Kooten
 Shell-NL BV
 Public Affairs
 P.O. Box 444
 2501 CK The Hague
 Netherlands
 31 703778738
 31 703778722
 tim.h.m.vankooten@sn.shell.com

Max de Groot
 North Sea Directorate
 Ministry of Transport, Water Management and Public
 Works
 P.O. Box 5807
 2280 HV Rijswijk
 31 70
 31 703951724

Annex 2.

Summaries of Welcome Addresses

Sea Alarm Foundation (Erica Terpstra, chairperson)



In her welcome address, Erica Terpstra reminded that developments in building the international networks in Europe and worldwide have been going remarkably fast. The feasibility study produced by Sea Alarm Foundation has not only catalysed co-operation between wildlife response organisations over the last two years, but also drew the attention of governments, their organisations and industry to this initiative. Ms. Terpstra especially acknowledged the great support from the International Tanker Owner Pollution Federation (ITOPF), the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), and Shell. They have taken an active lead in getting the important message across to the major oil companies, insurance companies and other industry parties: oiled wildlife response action needs recognition and structural consideration by the oil spill response community. Currently Sea Alarm Foundation finds itself in a position where concrete projects and activities can be proposed, and effective forms of cooperation with industry established. This is rather unique.

Also at government level in Europe events are moving forward. Discussions have started with the Civil Protection and Environmental Emergency Unit of DG Environment. The Unit is encouraging Sea Alarm Foundation to propose an activity in order to tackle the problem at a European level. The interest and support of the Dutch Government (the North Sea Directorate and Nature Directorate) in the activities of Sea

Alarm Foundation has resulted in the very appreciated grant to organise this Conference. At a worldwide level, Sea Alarm Foundation is involved in The Alliance of Oiled Wildlife Responders. This group of oiled wildlife experts aims at developing international standards for the rehabilitation of oiled wildlife, based on best available veterinary techniques and management approaches. It is very important that after each oil spill, activities are evaluated and lessons are learned. This requires a high level of international co-operation, and involvement of industry and governments to make it work. Sea Alarm Foundation aims to bridge any existing gap between the Alliance and the expertise and organisations in Europe.

In November last year, Sea Alarm Foundation took the initiative to bring together European wildlife rehabilitation organisations and to discuss the threat of oil pollution. Participants at that conference, in Pieterburen, concluded that the European preparedness for oil spills is not very high. It was decided to work together and to develop a programme of action. A Task Force from this group has worked on such a programme of action, and the result of that work should be subject of discussion here in The Hague. Priorities from that Programme must be set and some activities should be initiated immediately.

One of the subjects to be considered is the role of Sea Alarm Foundation and its Board in setting up a European co-operative network. The Board has been internationalised since the first Sea Alarm Conference last year. It has a full European representation now with its present members. This new Board has developed a mission statement. It includes a number of recommendations from the Task Force and should guide the developments over the next few years. One of the major issues of building a European oiled wildlife response organisation is communication with experts and expert organisations in the field. The Board hopes to set up a communication and decision making

structure which makes Sea Alarm Foundation acceptable as the executive instrument of the community of marine wildlife responders in Europe. How to do that will be subject of discussions of this Conference.

In the light of the progress sketched, Ms Terpstra said she was proud of what has already been achieved. But the time has now arrived to really start building the necessary facilities and making co-operation and communication structures effective. The network has to organise itself. Projects must be proposed and financed, because the only way to prove the intentions is to make it all work. The opportunity of this Conference should be taken to formalise the co-operation, to discuss which steps should be taken at the short term.

Shell-The Netherlands (Tim van Kooten, Public Affairs)



Mr. Tim van Kooten, on behalf of Shell Nederland, welcomed the participants and reminded of the good relationship between Lenie 't Hart of SRRRC Pieterburen and Mr Harry Roels of Shell, that was at the basis of organising this conference in the Shell Central Office in The Hague. He said Shell was pleased to be able to contribute in this way to the development of the international network of oiled wildlife responders. In response to the inspiring speech detailing the impressive progress of the Foundation presented by Erica Terpstra, Tim van Kooten hoped that the Conference would result in an effective plan of action and strategy and a consolidation of the network.

In his opinion, building liaisons with IMO, ITOFF local and national governments as well as the larger players within industry is important and he stressed how important it was that these steps had already been taken by Sea Alarm

Foundation. By involving industry, the recognition of oiled wildlife operations must, can and will be achieved. In this perspective, Shell's present contribution must be placed. Having an explicit mission concerning sustainable development, Shell's way of operation is to build a strategy and the tactics while making its steps.

The incident with the *Brent Spar* played a crucial role in the development of Shell's present attitude. It gave a wake-up call and stimulated the Company to re-invent its safety care responsibility. It resulted in a modern outlook on how to work together with other stakeholders in society in the process of sustainable development. Shell seeks a balance between what is called the "Triple P's": Profit, Planet's Environment and People.

This background demonstrates why Shell is genuinely interested in the objectives and activities of Sea Alarm Foundation and the group of organisations working together in its network. It has to do with engagement. Get into engagement. Sit together in dialogue. It's the role of Public Affairs Department to say: "Talk to us, we listen". That is a serious invitation to this group. We will listen to you. And we have good experience with Sea Alarm Foundation so far: the communication with colleagues in Shell UK has been excellent and have already formed a solid basis for cooperation.

In conclusion, Tim van Kooten stressed that it is not sufficient to define strategic steps towards sustainable development, they must be implemented, to write about progress and share it with others. He mentioned Shell's involvement in the gas exploration project in Camisea, Peru, where cooperation with local and international environmental groups has resulted in an "offshore" approach of a field in the middle of the Amazon jungle. This example has been described by the Smithsonian Institute in a brochure in order to share it with others. Also Shell's commitment to write an environmental chapter in its annual Shell Report was

mentioned. This year has been the fourth time that it has been done. It describes the steps that were taken, and identifies the footprints made. Within these perspectives, Tim van Kooten wished everyone a constructive and successful meeting.

North Sea Directorate (Max de Groot, Director Water Management and Pollution Control Unit)



Mr. Max de Groot, welcomed the participants of the meeting and gave a short description of the work and responsibilities of the North Sea Directorate, which is part of the Ministry of Transport, Water Management and Public Works.

Responsibilities of the Directorate are e.g. to maintain a clean and living sea, safety of shipping and good access of shipping routes in the Dutch sector of the North Sea. This means that the Directorate initiates regulations, coordinates dredging, takes care of the signposting of routes and protects the coastline from pollution. These tasks are carried out against the background of strongly increasing pressure of North Sea use: oil and gas exploration and production, pipelines and cables, dredging (24 million m³ per year), telecom high energy and telephone cables, wind energy (windmills at sea). At the same time the quality of ecological functions and recreation must be guaranteed.

Two objectives are central in North Sea policy, to involve all stakeholders and manage risk. For the first, spatial planning is a key instrument, and it is an important development that the North Sea has been recognised as a plan area in the latest policy document on Spatial Planning. With regard to the second, it is the reality that you can never reduce the risk of a disaster to zero. Two major disasters in the Netherlands (airplane

crash in 1992 and an explosion at a fireworks plant in 2000, both in the middle of cities, and many casualties) highlighted the importance of prevention, preparedness, contingency planning and evaluation.

In combating North Sea pollution from incidents, the North Sea Directorate and the Coast Guard are cooperating within an operational 24h crisis response and management unit and combating equipment is stand by and can be used on short notice. For surveillance both aircraft and satellite equipment are used. The London Convention and Bonn Agreement are the legal international frameworks for pollution response activities and also offer a legal basis for prosecuting the polluter. On a yearly basis, there are 700-800 oil pollution incidents at sea. In each case, there are attempts to identify the polluter and reclaim the costs of clean-up.

Looking at marine wildlife, it is a fact that oiled animals under certain conditions can be helped and rehabilitated. Therefore, the North Sea Directorate and the Nature Directorate (part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries) have jointly welcomed and supported this conference and the further intentions of Sea Alarm Foundation. Such an initiative could offer the necessary options for increasing the preparedness in this field, and bring oiled wildlife rehabilitation to a higher professional standard.

Mr de Groot concluded by saying that both Directorates will seriously consider the results of this conference, because they recognise that both ecological quality and biodiversity could profit from this work. He stressed that intentions should not be lost in discussions, but that steps of action should be taken. The North Sea Directorate is ready to consider how the results of this conference can be incorporated in its work.

Annex 3. Model wildlife contingency planning⁷

What do I mean by a model wildlife contingency plan?

This is a basic contingency plan which sets out a detailed approach to the collection, handling and care of oiled wildlife on a pan-European scale. The model should be designed in such a way as to be readily amended for individual countries, based on their methods of operation, legislation etc. The plan is not set in 'tablets of stone', rather it should be seen as a template which can be changed in the light of experience and as and when new procedures are developed.

What is the basic aim of a wildlife contingency plan

The basic aim is to have in plan an operational procedure which in the event of a spill can be implemented immediately. In essence it should set out details of how to establish a wildlife response centre (WRC), identify key personal and details links as to how the WRC operates within the wider National Oil Spill Response Programmes (or Contingency Plans, if they exist).

Why do we need such a plan?

Recent spills in Europe have clearly shown that the Wildlife Response is often poorly organised, and consequently is seen by many other agencies involved in oil spill clean up as 'unprofessional' and amateur. While in many instances this is not the case, it is true in others. If we are to operate such a plan, not only must it be professional in its approach, it must also be seen to be professional by the responsible agencies. Ideally Wildlife Response should be

integrated fully into National Oil Spill Contingency Plans. If we want this, then we, the responders, must be responsible for seeing that our operations are developed to the highest professional standard.

What are the existing problems?

These are many and varied, and some were discussed in my paper presented at last year's Pieterburen meeting. I will not reiterate them all here, but what I see as the main concerns are:

- at present the overall response is not co-ordinated, there can be too many people who think they are experts, 'doing their own thing' – result lack of co-operation, no leadership and links to the overall chain of command are non-existent;
- from this there can develop personal jealousies and conflicts;
- many of the self appointed experts have minimal experience and may do more harm than good;
- clean-up techniques are not necessarily the same and may not be to the best standards;
- spills are relatively few, and there are currently a few professionals who are competent to deal with wildlife clean-up. This expertise should be used, but the facilities need to be in place to call on this as and when required;

What should the Model Contingency Plan include?

The basic plan should include:

- a formal structure of command for the operation of the response. What are the key responsibilities, who can best deal with them etc.;
- protocols for responding to an incident. All incidents do not require a major response, thankfully it is a few. However, at the word oil spill, the great and the good (and not so

⁷ written contribution by Jim Conroy, Celtic Environment, Vice Chairperson Sea Alarm Foundation

good) appear. The result can be too many people and no work for them to do. My own inclination is that a response should be based at three levels (see below Three Tier Response);

- the plan should operate to the best protocols available, these should cover every aspect of the response and include, among other things cleaning operations, carcass storing, prioritising clean-up, protocols for the release of rehabilitated wildlife;
- details of accreditation should be included, only those who are nationally (internationally) accredited should be allowed to operate under the plan;
- health and safety issues needs to be addressed. These should be at an agreed standard, regardless of where the response takes place;
- details of equipment required for a Tier 1 response should be listed and how these can be accessed described.

What is a 'Three Tier Response'?

As already stated, relatively few spills require an international response, but this does not stop all the experts arriving. So how can this be reduced? (Note I say reduced, not avoided, because not all people will accept the concept of the plan.)

TIER 1 RESPONSE: This is an incident which the national responsible agency, in consultation with the agreed rehabilitators within the country, agree can be handled locally without additional response.

TIER 2 RESPONSE: The incident, while still not of a 'major' scale might be a cause for concern. For example, it has the potential to become more serious, it is getting to a stage where, locally it might not be contained. Advice is required. TIER 2 offers this facility. The Plan envisages a '24 hour help line' operated through a co-ordinating body. This will enable the

problem to be discussed and sources of help and advice identified. This is not a full scale response, but, for example a request for additional equipment, a specialist for a group of animals, additional hands-on help. This response still operates at a national level.

TIER 3 RESPONSE: This is the major incident, where an international response is required. The responsibility for the organising this is 'handed over' to a co-ordinating international body. In discussions with the local operators a joint decision on the scale of the response will be made, and an agreed level of response identified. The relevant agencies will then be invited to attend. The operation of this response should still, ideally be at the local level, but should operate along side the international experts.

How does an 'International Co-ordination Body' operate?

Ideally, a small secretariat needs to be established, its existence, role and function to be agreed by local national rehabilitators, legislators and industry. Within this body will be a number of experts who will be available to respond quickly to an incident with help, advice etc. Members of this body, while likely to be associated to specific organisations, will be expected to act independently of their parent bodies in the offering of advice. They should be able to identify and send key people to any incident WHEN INVITED. Personal will be available to attend TIER 1 responses.

The key people in any a response are seen as the scientific co-ordinator, the WRC administrator, the wildlife clean-up coordinator and the 'beach master'

When approached they will be able to give immediate advice, identify key equipment and have links with national and international wildlife rehabilitation agencies and wildlife experts.

What is the role of the 'International Co-ordinating Body'?

Ideally the body should have:

- the overall responsibility for maintaining and updating the plan as, for example new protocols develop;
- a role in the identification of training needs at national level;
- the responsibility of identifying equipment requirements for response, where it is stored and to release it for a specific incident;
- the responsibility for responding to requests from local, national groups for help and advice.
- databases of equipment, experts, protocols etc., which can be readily accessed;
- links with scientists with research interests in rehabilitation who can advise on post spill monitoring, survival etc.;

Also the body should undertake a post-spill audit of the operation and from this make recommendations for changes and modifications to the Contingency Plan, if deemed necessary (this has been a major omission from all recent spills – the lessons learnt from one incident have not been transferred and many of the problems encountered are the same time after time).

There might also be a role for organising seminars and work shops etc it required and/or requested

Who should be responsible for implementing the plan?

Ideally the ultimate responsibility for implementing the Plan will be the local national co-ordinator. The level of response required can only be assessed at the local level. Their interpretation of the incident will determine the response and the national/international involvement. The 'Co-ordinating Body' will be responsible for 'servicing' these requests.

The role of National, European Governments and Industry in the success of the plan.

Without the support of governments and the industry, the Plan will never operate successfully. They need to be involved in all stages of the development of the plan and its subsequent operation. There should be regular contacts between the Co-ordinating body and these agencies. Their expertise is vast and necessary. The Plan will operate successfully only if there is large scale agreement with all parties involved. The funding of the Plan should be largely met from government and the industry.

Finally

Remember wildlife response is only part of the wider oil spill recovery operation, rehabilitators must strive to be accepted as part of that team. To achieve this, they must be seen by the other professionals to be professional in their approach. The current methods of operation should not be allowed to continue. They are wasteful in money, resources and largely amateurish in operation – but most importantly of all they can be detrimental to the welfare of the wildlife. After all this is what we are in this business for. By a national/international team approach we should be better served to improve the rehabilitation of oiled wildlife.

The approach detailed above is one that Sea Alarm Foundation sees as possibly the best and efficient way to do this.

Annex 4.

Summaries of 5-minutes presentations



Asa Ryden

Name organisation: Birdcenter – Gothenburg Ornithological Society

Country, city: Sweden , Gothenburg

Active: since 1987

Species: All wild birds

Region of activity: West coast of Sweden

Experience in (international) oiled wildlife emergency assistance and co-operation: No, but national. We wash a few birds every week during the winter.

Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

The reason we began to work with birds in captivity was the Peregrine Falcon's bad conservation status, i.e. almost extinct in Sweden. In 1976 there were only one pair left in the south of Sweden and ten in the north. The main reason was poisoning of the eggs by different kinds of poison like for example DDT, PCB and mercury.

A breeding project started in the beginning of the 1970:s and 401 young peregrines is released since then from Birdcenter and over 600 in total.

It was a quite hard job at first to get the pairs to get along and breed in captivity and then when the young's clutched the real work started with feeding every fourth hour.

In 1987 the breeding was moved from private persons, because of the bad results, to a new built place called Birdcenter close to Gothenburg.

3 part-time employers were hired to take care of the peregrine breeding. Last year we could, at last after almost 30 years, see an end to the captivity for the falcons. 35 pairs are now to be seen in the south of Sweden and 65 in the north. The peregrine is now probably saved. Unless new poisons destroy the eggshells.

Only a few months after we moved to Birdcenter. There was a tanker "Tolmiros", which dropped a lot of oil among the east coast of Denmark, near Hanstholm. The oil then floated and came to land, about 30 km north from us on the Swedish west coast. Soon people started to call and ask if we could take care of oil damaged birds that had been found. Because there was no one else who could it better we tried to help the best we could.

To take care of injured birds of all kinds has now become the main objective of Birdcenter. Every year about 400 birds are passing our "hospital". We also try to give much information to for example school classes about how birds get hurt and what one can do to prevent injuries.

Along the west coast there have been three larger founds of oil-damaged birds in the last 20 years. In the beginning of the 1980:s about 100.000 birds died because of oil.

The first year in Birdcenter's history we took care of one hundred oil damaged birds, but 20.000 bullets were given to the hunters ! We are sure that many were killed that could have been saved instead.

And then the latest oil catastrophe in January 1993 when we took care of about 110 birds in a few weeks, just after the tanker had sunk near Scotland. We believe the weak birds were blown to Sweden by strong west wind.

The most common bird that we wash is guillemot and swan. An ordinary winter, with no reported oil

spills, we wash a few birds a week.

The birds are often found after strong winds from the west. Weak birds then cannot hold against the winds and are blown far up on land. In winters without wind we believe the birds are still getting injured but die on one of the 2.000 remote islands that are spread along the west coast. So our biggest problem, apart from financial problems, is to reach the injured birds that suffer at those remote places.



Laurent Brucy

Name organisation: Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux LPO, representing Birdlife Int.

Country, city: France, Rochefort

Active since: 1912

Species: LPO protects all native wild birds, and the habitats on which they depend.

Region of activity: 51 French départements

Experience in (international) oiled wildlife emergency assistance and co-operation: Amoco, Erika



We have 2 rehabilitation centres for oiled birds (and others birds), one at Ile Grande (the first in France, Côte d'Armor in north of Brittany) and the other at Lorient (Morbihan, southern of Brittany), and 3 others regional rehabilitation centres for birds in general. We also cooperation with other French and European rehabilitation centres in Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland etc.

Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

After the Erika oil spill, LPO has been working on 3 subjects :

1. Development of a coherent structure of centres to deal with emergencies in France :
 - renovation of the rehabilitation centre at Ile Grande and the construction of two new rehabilitation centres in in Lorient and La Rochelle.
 - construction of 2 Emergency Mobil Units for birds in distress (one based in the rehabilitation centre at La Rochelle, the other on the Mediterranean coast)
2. Preparation of a model contingency plan
 - for the "Observatoire Associatif des Marées Noires", LPO is co-ordinating the preparation of a Methodological Guide which regroups all the aspects necessary to build a rehabilitation centre for 200 oiled birds in the minimum amount of time (veterinary protocols, techniques for pools, management of volunteers, legal, financial and administrative aspects etc.).
 - LPO is working with the French authorities at different levels to learn, modify and ameliorate the safety plan for oil spill.
3. Education

LPO is preparing a number of different educational documents for children, students or adults explaining an oil spill, rehabilitation of oiled birds, French safety plan etc.



José María Gaya

Name organisation: Fundació per la Conservació i Recuperació d'Animals Marins (CRAM)

Country, city: Spain , Barcelona

Active since: 1994

Species: Turtles, Marine Mammals

Region of activity: Catalonia

Experience in (international) oiled wildlife emergency assistance and co-operation: No experience.



Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

CRAM is a private foundation which works on recovering, investigation and education. The recovery centre in Premià de Mar is the only centre specialised and equipped to recover marine animals to be acknowledged by la Generalitat de Catalunya, being the first one with such characteristics in the Mediterranean. The tasks performed by the members of the Foundation concentrate on three guidelines:

- Aiding and recovering protected marine animals
- Boosting investigation protects.
- Acting on sensibility and environmental education



Emmanuel Risi

Name, organisation: Centre de Soins de la Faune Sauvage (Wildlife Centre)

Ecole nationale vétérinaire de Nantes (National Veterinary School of Nantes)

Country, city: France, Nantes

Active since: 1985

Species: Wild birds (raptors, aquatic birds...) and wild mammals (No marine mammals)

Region of activity: Western France

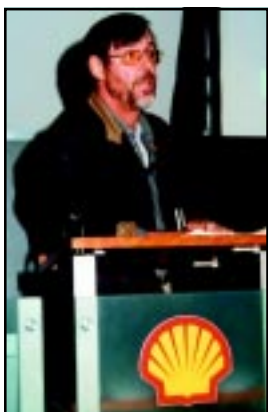
Experience in (international) oiled wildlife emergency assistance and co-operation:

- ERIKA oil spill : 11000 birds received
- Oiled birds : 150-200 each year



Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

The wildlife Centre of Nantes has been created in 1985. We received in 2001, 800 wild animals, 95% of them are birds (raptors and aquatic birds) 5% are mammals. The wildlife centre is 30 minutes from the sea and near lakes, so we receive a lot of aquatic birds. There are 7 aviaries, one of them with a pool. We treat birds suffering from hunting, electrocution, injuries and fractures, intoxication and oil spill. We can use the facilities of the Veterinary School, like radiology, endoscopy, surgery. In December 1999 and during 5 months, we received 11000 oiled birds from the ERIKA. We worked with 1500 volunteers and 6 vets. The goals of the wildlife hospitals are to develop medicine and surgery on wild animals, develop some scientific studies on oiled birds and epidemiological studies on raptors intoxications, blood parasites, bacterial and fungal infection of aquatic birds. The wildlife centre is developing a vet and biologist network for western of France to respond to an oil spill.



Gerry Dorrestein

Name organisation: Werkgroep Vogelasielen
(Working-group Bird Rehabilitation Centres)
Chairman: Gerry M. Dorrestein, Utrecht University
Secretary: Albert Fopma, BirdLife-NL
Chair Oil Response Co-ordination: Dick Jongman, Fügelpits, Anjum
Country, city: The Netherlands, Zeist (location Birdlife-NL)
Active since: 25 years
Species: Birds, including marine birds
Region of activity: The Netherlands
Experience in (international) oiled wildlife emergency assistance and co-operation: Borsia (1986), Pallas (1999), Erika (2000), San Mateo Coast- Mystery Spill (2002).

Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

The working-group (Wg) is a "semi-volunteer" organisation that has representatives of BirdLife-NL, Ministry of Fishery, Agriculture and Nature Conservation (LNV), Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Bird Rehabilitation Centres. It started 25 years ago as an advisory body to the Ministry of LNV regarding licensing managers of Bird Rehabilitation Centres (BRC). In the Netherlands are appr. 102 licensed "terrestrial" BRC's and 19 RBC's related to oil spill responses.

The Wg also works on improvement of the quality of these BRC's through providing a Newsletter, editing and updating Protocols for the Care of Oil-affected Birds, organising an Annual Meeting for BRC's, distribution of (minimal) funds and providing a National Coordination Team for Oil Spill Responses involving marine birds.

In the Netherlands there are 5 primary BRC's (K1 kustasielen) prepared for Oil Spill Responses, distributed evenly along the coast: Fügelpits, Anjum; Ecomare, Texel; Vogelrampenfonds, Haarlem; Vogelklas Karel Schot, Rotterdam and De Mikke, Middelburg. The total capacity is estimated to be 2000 oiled birds. These K1 BRC's are backed up in case of emergency by 6 second-line K2- and 8 tertiary K3-BRC's.

In case of an Oil Spill the Coordination Team has the following tasks:

Contact with the official oil response authorities (RWS), coordinating between the BRC's, contact to a international network (e.g. Sea Alarm), debriefing and financial settlement after the response.



Jan Hillarp

Name organisation: KfV:s Riksförbund
(Swedish Wildlife Rehabilitators Association)
Country, city: Sweden, Kristianstad
Active since: 1979 founding group started, 1983 network started, 1998 national association was founded
Species: All birds + hedgehog + hares + squirrel. One centre also has a permit for all mammals
Region of activity: Mainly coastal southern Sweden, but some in the inland as well as in the north.
Experience in (international) oiled wildlife emergency assistance and co-operation: No experience in international operations. We are used to local spills and regional cooperation.



Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

400 –500 small mostly deliberate spills every year. Due to cold water and cold air the evaporation of spills are low. Sometimes the oil sinks and comes up again when water is warmer. Birds are mainly affected and hundreds of thousands of birds die every year. Seals generally leave the area of a spill. Grey and ringed seal pups have been moderately oiled before losing the lanugo coat. We cooperate regionally with the Coast Guard and with the local rescue forces. The greater part of the oiled birds die at sea or on the coast and some 30.000 birds are shot. We normally get few birds and generally with little oil and in very poor condition. They have to be nutriated, treated with antibiotics and vermicids before getting in condition for cleaning. We generally succeed with about 50 % of the birds, which mainly are eider ducks. The recovery time is long. We also work with the local nature conservation societies and local societies for animal welfare. We have close relations with the local police and local animal hospitals and veterinarians. The National Police Board and the Swedish Environmental Agency has long been engaged in our courses for rehabbers. We are working to increase the education for rehabbers and to get it recognized by the government. We have worked towards getting an education in ecology for prosecutors. Oil pollution has been regarded an economical problem, though it is an ecological one. We have had some responses on our lobbying and we today have better law enforcement than 10 years ago. We also have made a technical report on rehabilitation of oiled birds on the request of the National Environmental Agency. KfV is working hard in getting all with rehabilitation permits under the roof of the organisation to increase cooperation and education. Sweden has a fairly good responses to oil spills. The regional authorities have mapped the coast regarding its vulnerability to spills, the Coast Guard has specially equipped units for detecting oil spills and for fighting oil at sea. The local rescue forces together with the communes take care of oil on the shores.



Jeny Androukaki

Name organisation, staffing details: MOM/
Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of
the Monk Seal



Country, city: Greece, Athens

Active since: 1988

Species: Mediterranean Monk seal *Monachus monachus*

Region of activity: Eastern Mediterranean Sea

Experience in international emergency assistance and co-operation:

Rescue and Rehabilitation of Mediterranean monk seal pups in
collaboration with SRRC.

Exchange of information with SAD/AFAG and Foca Pilot project in order
to react in case of emergency in Eastern Mediterranean.

Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

Since 1988, MOM, reacting to the threats that Monk Seal is facing, has been activated in the research and protection of the species in Greece. Apart from field research, environmental education, establishment, management and safeguarding of protected areas, MOM has established and operates a Rescue and Information Network (RINT) with contacts throughout the Greek coastline. Through RINT, MOM receives information on the distribution, breeding and overall status of the monk seal population, as well as on emergency cases. MOM reacts, through a set of protocols, which ensures the

effectiveness of the effort. These protocols include all actions from the receipt of an emergency call, the treatment of the animal and its eventual release or, in unfortunate cases, its necropsy. The rehabilitation takes place in the Seal Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre in Alonissos, established since 1990 in facilities, donated by SRRC. From 1987 till 2001 14 pups and 7 adults have been treated in the centre or on site with a joint effort of MOM and SRRC. MOM is at presently a volunteer member of the Contingency Plan for Oil Spills of the Hellenic Ministry of Merchant Marine. Its responsibility is the treatment of oiled Monk seals.



Dick Jongman

Name organisation, staffing details: Fugelpits

Country, city: Netherlands, Anjum

Active since: 23 years

Species: Birds

Region of activity: Wadden Sea, North Sea Coast

Experience in international emergency assistance and co-operation:

Several incidents in Wadden Sea Area, Erika

Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

The Fugelpits is a foundation, which in 23 years helps birds by cleaning, taking care en release them. Our area is the Waddensea and the coast of the north of the Netherlands. Our achievements are the cleaning of the birds with a machine and catching the birds with special trained dogs.

Birds which can be caught by humans in the muddy Wadden Sea are close to dying, dogs can take them when the birds are in a much better shape.

We from the Fugelpits are very grateful, that Sea-Alarm can have a meeting in building of the Shell in The Hague. A good relation with the industry is a condition for a good environmental practise. In the past and even in the recent past they're some incident, which are worth mentioning.

Without the help of the industry the Fugelpits was not so well equipped and did not have the know how. We have the bird cleaning machine, which we got from Elf Petroland. But without the industry the Fugelpits was not necessary. It is the duty of the industry to reduce their environmental damage. Not everyone can appreciate, when we start the discussion.

For instance at the beginning of January 1990 a lot of seabirds came to our centre. Some of them had very high concentrations of the very dangerous chemical nonylfenol glued to their feathers. (Concentrations of 80.000 mg. Per kg feather) Nonylfenol at sea is only used by the off shore and is very expensive. No one will spill nonylfenol. The traced point of the spill appeared to be a place where no ship with commercial cargo will come, but the suppliers the drilling platforms frequented that place. Simultaneously with the spill an accident occurred on the Ned drill 4 (hired by the Dutch Mineral-oil Company) near Terschelling (an island). Also spills occurred during that accident. The company rejected all the responsibility and blamed the Fugelpits to publish their ideas. They also rejected an offer from the famous research institute TNO Den Helder to find out for • 16.000 what the most probable occurrence was.

Another incident was more recent. It was the incident with the Erika in Breton (France) Children without the desired protection clothes (According to the protocol) cleaned beach and birds. When we published that the oil was the dangerous Bunker C no6, we got a lot of critics. Later the Dutch administration admitted that the governments must had have worn the people. The Erika cost the Dutch a lot of money, but the letter of June 2000 that we wrote to Total is still unanswered.

This indicates, that we urgently need an organisation with more power and expertise towards politics and industry that is Sea-Alarm. Lets hope that this conference is the start of a new period, which benefit the sea- environment.



Monica Rolinska

Name organisation: Hel Marine Station University of Gdansk, Association „Friends of Hel”

Country, city: Poland, Hel

Species: Birds and marine mammals

Region of activity: Southern Baltic Sea

Short abstract:

Non-government organization Friends of Hel and Hel Marine Station University of Gdansk are two bodies cooperating to preserve and protect marine wildlife. They specialize in rehabilitation of marine species and undertake many other activities. Friends of Hel is conceived as a common initiative of conservationists, fishermen and the recreation sector.



Roustam Sagitov

Name organisation: St.Petersburg Naturalists Society

Country, city: Russian Federation, St.Petersburg

Active since: 1868

Species: Whole spectrum of biota

Region of activity: Mainly North-western region of Russia (Baltic sea catchment area, White and Barentz sea regions)

Experience in (international) oiled wildlife emergency assistance and co-operation: No experience yet in oiled wildlife emergency and cooperation

Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

St.Petersburg Naturalists Society – SPNS is one of the oldest Russian Environmental NGOs and the natural sciences societies that was founded in 1868 under the highest permission of the Emperor Alexander II. Originally the Society was tightly connected to St.Petersburg Imperial University, mainly to its divisions of biology, geography and geology. Today it is an independent regional public organisation, still working in close co-operation with the St.Petersburg State University and Russian Academy of Science.

From the very beginning the main goals of the Society were (1) to promote natural sciences, (2) to favour natural research in Russia, and (3) to facilitate co-operation among scientists and nature lovers. Evidently, the goals are still valuable nowadays. Support of students' and young specialists' education and practical work has always been the one of the most important SPNS missions.

The Society is divided into nineteen sections with about 400 members and volunteers. Active field research in the North-western Russia is organised through special botanical, zoological and environmental expeditions. “

Since 1995 the Baltic Fund for Nature (BFN) was established within the SPNS to promote and coordinate environmental projects and programmes in the Baltic sea drainage area. BFN is also responsible for SPNS international co-operation in the fields of nature conservation. Nowadays the BFN is one of the largest and well known units of the Society

Few words about the eastern Gulf of Finland : after loss of harbours in Baltic States Russia started to develop this sector in the Gulf of Finland. That's why at least 3 new harbours are under construction on the coast of the Gulf. The most alarming one is the oil terminal in Primorsk which already started to function in November. It's current capacity is 12mln tons per year with plans to increase it up to 30 mln. The major potential threats are: disturbance of wildlife (harbour is located next to Ramsar site), potential oil spills, potential tankers catastrophes in conditions of shallow waters and severe navigation conditions, especially in winter time. Winter traffic will for sure strongly affect almost extinct population of Ringed seal (main pupping and moulting areas are situated along the routs).



Antonio Di Natale

Name organisation, staffing details: Acquario di Genova, Aquastudio

Country, city: Italy, Genova (Acquario), Messina (Aquastudio)

Species: Dolphins and whales

Region of activity: Western Mediterranean Sea

Experience in international emergency

assistance and co-operation: There are different examples of international co-operation.



Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

The Italian network for marine animals in troubles is currently managed by Centro Studi Cetacei, but only for the protected species (sea turtles and marine mammals); the organisation, active since 1985, includes regional contact persons, local active groups, emergency groups for live strandings or entangled animals at sea, veterinarian specialists and rehabilitation centres, and it is officially recognised by the Direction General for Fishery and Aquaculture and the CITES Service. In case of emergency, the CSC could ask for the technical support of the Castalia rescue and emergency fleet to the Ministry of the Environment. The Italian network is supported by an efficient 24-hour call centre provided as a sponsorship by Europ Assistance. The LIPU (Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli) and the Italian WWF, with theirs rehabilitation centres, are usually involved when the animals in trouble are sea-birds. No specific plans are currently in place for the rescue operation of marine animals in case of oil spills.



Tim Thomas

Name organisation: Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals (RSPCA)

Country, city: UK

Species: Birds and mammals

Region of activity: UK/worldwide

Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

The RSPCA and its place in the UK oil pollution contingency plan

The RSPCA is the principle organisation in England and Wales that deals with oiled wildlife. Its role is to look after the welfare of any affected animals and to release them in a state where they have as good a chance of survival as if they had not been oiled in the first place.

The Society has been involved in the welfare of oiled animals for almost as long as it can remember. There are, for example, newspaper reports of it dealing with oiled birds during the First World War. However, it was not until the Torrey Canyon spill in 1967 that real interest was given to the plight of stricken animals, particularly birds. Following this disaster Newcastle University in the UK was specially funded to undertake the groundbreaking research that led to a successful method of cleaning oiled birds.

The method has been used all over the world and has been so refined that it is now become quite an art in itself. However, all the cleaning cannot replace the real problem of re-establishing that once oiled animal back into its natural home. It seems that more effort is now put into the animals' long-term survival in the wild as there is in cleaning them.

The RSPCA's role within the UK's official national oil pollution contingency plan is clear – it is primary agent responsible for the welfare of all the living animals affected by the spill. This will include activities such as the setting up of emergency facilities at the site of the spill and dealing with the immediate effects on the oiled wildlife before sending the animals for cleaning at one of the Society's wildlife hospitals. Each of the hospitals has specialised cleaning facilities where the appropriate staff expertise is more readily available.

The RSPCA is formally recognised in most of the official plans that are drawn up by the local authorities under the national pollution plan. The Society for example reports daily to the agency immediately involved in controlling the counter pollution measures and is directly involved in the planning procedures for the clean-up.

The most significant advantage with the RSPCA in such emergency situations is that we have a permanent staff who can be mobilised in a relatively short period of time and who have the relevant training for particular circumstances. The appropriate equipment is often held in store and is maintained for emergencies. Volunteer personnel can be mobilised but often getting the right team into an emergency situation can often prove impossible - staff are fully trained and more readily available for this type of operation.

The RSPCA is very experienced with major spills and has staff that has attended many of the world's

biggest spills. It has attended at many of the most infamous spills outside of the UK either in a primary or supportive role and can offer a range of skills developed through years of practical development and implementation.



Lenie 't Hart

Name organisation: SRRRC Seal Rehabilitation and Research Centre Pieterburen

Country, city: The Netherlands, Pieterburen

Active since: 1971

Species: Common seal, Grey seal, all kinds of marine mammals

Region of activity: Dutch Waddensea and all countries in the world where help is requested.

Experience in international emergency assistance and co-operation: Shetlands (Brear), Wales (Sea Empress), Uruguay (San Jorge), Germany (Pallas), Turkey (oil cleaning action), Mauritania (virus outbreak among monk seals), Kazakhstan (mass mortality), Galapagos (Jessica) etc.



Short abstract of the presentation given at the meeting:

Yearly the SRRRC rehabilitates more than 200 seals of different species in the centre in Pieterburen. In this rehabilitation program the SRRRC uses the combination of protocolised rehabilitation of marine mammals, scientific research (with an emphasis on virological research) and education. International co-operation helped to build up a world-wide network. In 1998-1999 The SRRRC initiated the foundation of Sea Alarm. The SRRRC states that we have to be prepared to many kinds of disasters: oil, chemicals, but also viruses. The SRRRC has been invited to many places in the world; she has shared its knowledge and as a result many local groups started their own rehabilitation centre. For them and others the SRRRC will always be a helpdesk, and everyone is welcome in Pieterburen to learn rehabilitation techniques, feeding procedures etc. Soon all activities will be carried out under ISO-certification.



Thanos Belidades

Archelon, the Sea Turtle Protection Society (since 1993) is a well known NGO in Greece dealing with the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats. Its knowledge of oil spill response is very little. 2500 turtle nests are treated annually, whereas 100 km of beach is conserved and controlled.

Archelon works together with e.g. UNEP and many other international organisations. Also cooperation has been set up with fishermen, although this is difficult and extremely complex.

On an annual basis, there are 200 known turtle strandings. Given the fact that Greece has over 7000 km of beaches, many more unknown strandings must be assumed.

Greece has an oil spill frequency of about one oil spill a day, and ca. 20% of the total oil annually spilled in the Mediterranean Sea is spilled in the Greek archipelago. We have several concerns:

Does the chemical composition of the beaches change due to the frequency of oil spills?

Can we expect a higher frequency of skin diseases from oil?

How does oil affect the food chain?

Apart from oil spills, there are other concerns for the future conservation of the sea turtles in Greece, e.g. side effects from vessel operation (professional shipping and leisure), and global warming: the expectation on global warming is that within 100 years many nesting areas will disappear. Hopefully in the future we are able to take a more pro-active approach on all these matters instead of a responsive approach, including oil transport and the risk of oil spills.



Giulia Mo

ICRAM (Central Institute for Applied Marine Research)

is a public autonomous research institute whose role is to provide the Italian Ministry of the Environment, under whose supervision it operates, with the necessary scientific and technical support concerning the current environmental policy of sustainable management and conservation of marine resources. The institute is thus involved in activities falling within three main sectors:

1. The protection of the water quality of the sea, coastal and lagoon environments;
2. The sustainable and responsible use of the marine environment and its resources;
3. The conservation of marine biological diversity, with special reference to the safeguarding of habitat (MPAs) and of marine protected species.

Moreover, the institute is legally entrusted with providing scientific support to the Ministry of the Environment's Crisis Unit in case of marine environmental emergencies. To this regards the institute:

- has provided support to the Ministry of the Environment in the identification of eco-compatible methods for combating oil pollution and clean-up activities resulting from accidental events
- has provided technical- scientific support to decision-makers involved in the identification of response measures for combating oil pollution due to accidental chemical and oil spills (under the request of the EC DG Environment, Civil Protection Unit)
- is in the process of defining a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (REMPEC) and ICRAM. The Memorandum foresees the activation of the institute in identifying eco-compatible means of intervening in Mediterranean marine emergencies and providing technical-scientific assistance, when needed and requested, to Mediterranean countries involved in pollution fighting and clean-up of oil spills.



Timo Asanti

The Finnish Environment Institute is the competent government pollution combating authority. It is in charge of measures against pollution incidents at open waters and whenever severity of an incident so necessitates. The work relates to following types of incidents:

- all marine accidents which may present a risk of an oil spill or other environmental damage and all evidently illegal discharges from vessels;
- other major oil or chemical accidents;
- unusual deaths of wildlife and sudden damage to vegetation unusual algae blooming and other sudden signs of environmental incident or contamination.

The Finnish Environment Institute has a 24-hour environmental incident duty service.

In Finland there is eleven government owned ship-size vessels and 12 boats of municipalities (10-18 meters long) with oil recovery brush system fitted permanently inside the vessel.

For oil spill prevention and clean-up in Finland there are strategic action plans for the whole country and also for regional accidents both in the Baltic Sea area and in the larger inland lake areas.

The Finnish Environment Institute produces information and solutions to support ecologically sustainable development. By monitoring the environment, carrying out environmental research and assessing environmental changes, we produce accurate and relevant information to be used in decision-making on the environment. We study environmental changes and evaluate their economic and social impacts and we also develop technological approaches to reducing environmental loading. In Finland the most important tasks for environmental protection are to improve the ecological status of the Baltic Sea and the quality of inland waters to manage and control climate change to safeguard biological diversity and to reduce the risks caused by toxic chemicals in the environment.

Annex 5. Work programme discussions

National network of cooperation

The importance of national networks of cooperation was agreed. Such networks provide information and assistance and act as Tier one and Tier two responders. National networks should seek contact with their respective national authorities, and develop a close working relationship. Members of the Sea Alarm Network should work at a national level to set up networks at a national level.

Key issues for international cooperation

The international network (Sea Alarm, Alliance) should develop two platforms:

Platform of communication:

Meetings (Conferences should be held regularly, e.g. on an annual basis)

Internet/list server

Platform of knowledge

Ensure compatibility of methodology

Respect differences in culture and national differences

International exchange and national progress should be linked

Database development

Database development in this stage of Sea Alarm's development should be considered a key project. It should provide accurate data on e.g. experts and expertise, how many centres there are along coasts, what are their specialisations, facilities and equipments? What

are the various national legislations on this specific issue? What are the chain of command in each Country in case of an oil spill?

Problems to face at an international level of cooperation

In co-operating internationally, we have to face a cascade of problems:

Protocols: have to be harmonised. Does everybody work according to the same high standards? Which are those standards?

Networks should be developed and maintained
Prevention of spills in general or prevention of has been set up. Board membership is reserved for European marine wildlife responders, and there is a rotating system in which members serve for a defined period of time. European geographical representation is important for the Board's composition. Annual meetings of Sea Alarm "member organisations" should evaluate and give steering to the developing international processes. The Board can be seen as the day to day managing group, being responsible for the overall activities that are carried out by the Director and a secretariat.

Underlying principles of work

Starting principles of work should be considered as a combination of

Nature and animal welfare

Optimising human resources

Optimising technical resources

Rapid response facility

Storing of equipment: The database: where are the experts, organisations, stockpiles? Do you need oil spill stockpiles? This question has to be looked at carefully, because there are obvious advantages but also disadvantages. For instance,

escalation of a spill should be aimed at. Co-operation, and sharing information with authorities is a main element in prevention. Coastal monitoring: baseline studies must be carried out.

Emergency tools, their transportation: these are central issues in setting up an international facility for rapid response and assistance.

Liability and timely information on toxicity of a spill

From experiences of individual wildlife response organisations in past spills it is felt that compensation of wildlife rehabilitation costs is not fully accepted by the authorities and liable parties. In the cooperation with industry, the point should be raised how to minimise illegal discharges at sea, which cause a large problem in the day to day reality of wildlife rehabilitators. Also the issue of human safety is an important subject, e.g. that adequate and timely information is given about toxic compounds in the oil spilled.

What is the advantage of cooperation? What is Sea Alarm? What can it provide?

Sea Alarm should not be considered as a lobbying group. Lobbying should be done by individual organisations at their national levels, or by specialised NGO's at an international level, e.g. within bodies like IMO. Sea Alarm should restrict itself at its sole task to establish a professional level of preparedness as is stated in the organisation's mission and objective sheet. But Sea Alarm could be important for individual organisations as a source of knowledge and also for developing activities of common interest, e.g. raising funds for training, projects etc. The network such as we are establishing now will be very useful for day to day information exchanges

and co-operation. It will have many spin offs that are advantageous to individual network members. The network has many advantages for its members. *"Go for a chat with your German colleague instead of approaching a group in the US"*. Get something back from Sea Alarm: training, liaisons with industry, international contacts. Sea Alarm can also assist to find funding.

Chemical spills

Do we have to take chemical spills into consideration? Of course the network, once established, would also be able to respond to chemicals other than oil. At the moment however, this is not a core activity in developing response preparedness. The same goes for the problems of alien species, and biological pollution of the sea.

Liability and accreditation

The question "who pays in the case something happens?" should be answered in the short term. It can be expected that claims will be taken more smoothly once the international networks of Sea Alarm and The Alliance are recognised and accredited by industry and governments.

Issues of a short term programme

A very important issue that should appear in the short term programme is to learn lessons from experience in past spills.

Organisation of the network

What is the status of this foundation? How is its organisation proposed? Sea Alarm's Board

members explained how Sea Alarm Foundation which materials and equipment should be stored centrally? Can they be kept for a longer period of time without deteriorating?

Prevention: how to do it?

Prevention also includes minimising the catastrophe in an actual spill, scientific post-spill evaluation, learning lessons, increase preparedness for the next spill: improve on mistakes being made and do not make them again.

Political statements

Do we have to make a political statement, e.g. prohibit transport of oil in wrecks? It was generally felt that Sea Alarm should refrain from ANY political statements. It should stick to its core objective: making all parties cooperate in getting a job done according to high professional standards and certain ethics. However, it was recognised that some associated members would be expected to give political statements. They should not do that in the name of Sea Alarm but in the name of their own only. Participants felt a code of ethics would be needed: how do we intend to operate, what are our standards, not only in a strict veterinary sense, but also in a wider one: how do we intend to co-operate within an overall cleanup response operation. How do we deal with the press and the public?

Objective of a work programme for the next few years

The simple objective of the next few years should be: ***make European expertise available and improve it.***

Organisation structure for European cooperation

Developing a pan-European network is broadly supported, but it should be well organised and coordinated. The organisation chart in the Task Force Report is acceptable for the time being.

Geographical limits to operations?

Sea Alarm should not be restricted to Europe only. The response expedition to the Galapagos is an example of how Sea Alarm can come into action in a spill at a remote location: a European expertise group is put together after a request for assistance has been received.

Added value of cooperation

The *Erika* experience clearly showed that a large number of organisations acting individually are less effective. Transportation of animals was not a good idea. Organising all these organisation and bringing them under one effective response structure is the difference Sea Alarm could make. The *Erica* experience should have told the world that we have to unite, work together.

Ways of communication

How to establish better communication roots? One meeting a year may not be enough. Newsletter? But how to make a newsletter that everybody reads and contribute to?

Annex 6.

Contents of the Task Force Report

The Task Force report has the following chapters, or main activities:

- Fundamental issues
- Representation and strategic alliances
- Towards international response activities
- General activities

Each main activity has the following specifications or project descriptions (NB: *ursive* means that these specifications or activities have already been adopted or executed by the Board; **bold** means that the Conference has taken a decision; underlined means priority for the 2002-2003 programme):

Fundamental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Geographic scope</i> - <i>Species, habitats</i> - <i>Goals, objectives, mission statement</i> - <i>Funding strategy</i> - Members (three levels of membership) - Administration, decision making, board - Organisation
Representation, strategic alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u><i>Contacts European marine wildlife rehabbers</i></u> - <u>Database development</u> - <u><i>Global network rehabbers World-Europe</i></u> - <u><i>Involving industry</i></u> - <u><i>Involving governments</i></u> - Involving science - Public relations
Towards international response activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>In situ assistance (intermediate solution)</u> - <u>Model contingency plan</u> - <u>Emergency equipment in warehouses</u> - <u>Accreditation, protocol developments World-Europe</u>
General activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u><i>Coupling activities-funding Strategy</i></u> - Training national capacity building - Studies - <u>Overview state of the art European rehab database development</u> - <u>National overviews legislation, licenses, contingency planning etc; database development</u>

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Sea Alarm Foundation
 Secretariat: Quai aux Briques 22
 B-1000, Brussel
 Fax: +32 . 2 . 502 . 74 38
 E-mail address: secretariat@sea-alarmnet.org

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