



Sea Alarm is partner in an EU co-funded project to develop a Handbook for Wildlife Impact Assessment. The project, which is lead by Royal Nioz (Netherlands) and in which also the University of La Coruña is a partner, aims to bring together the leading European seabird scientists to discuss and agree upon a best practice methodology for baseline data collection and analysis during an after an oil spill incident. The standard methodology will be published as a peer reviewed handbook that can be used internationally to quantify the impact of an oil spill on seabird populations.

## Handbook Impact Assessment

### Partners

Royal NIOZ (Netherlands, lead)  
Universidade da Coruña (Spain)  
Sea Alarm Foundation (Belgium)

The effects of major oil spills and chronic oil pollution on marine wildlife, notably seabirds, are seemingly all too well known. Population effects of oil-induced mortality are difficult to assess, however, and few studies have succeeded in identifying trends in population size or recruitment, following a given spill. There are several reasons why the impact on seabirds may be difficult to quantify. Accurate estimates of the total number of birds killed require effort-corrected beached bird surveys and drift-experiments during

the incident. Apart from these, two variables are very important: the age structure of the casualties and their (most likely) breeding origin. Hence, to be able to measure any population effects, high quality data should be obtained from corpses counted and collected during an oil spill. The lack of standardisation however flaws the possibilities to analyse the effects of spills.

### Workshop

A scientific workshop will be held in La Coruña, Spain, 3-6 August 2006. In preparation of the workshop, a literature review will be carried out on recent, major oil spills with emphasis on data collection and post-spill evaluations of population effects. The workshop proceedings and the Handbook will be peer reviewed before publication.

### Planning

Formal start of the project  
February 2006  
Workshop  
3-6 August 2006  
Report  
December 2006  
Formal end of the project  
February 2007

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