OILED WILDLIFE RESPONSE NEWSLETTER

New Zealand
Wildlife Health Centre

Issue 2, March 2009

The 'Oiled Wildlife Response (OWR) Newsletter' will be circulated every three months by the New Zealand Wildlife Health Centre (NZWHC), Massey University. We intend that these newsletters will serve to keep Oiled Wildlife Responders up to date with events and news about oiled wildlife response both in New Zealand and abroad. Contributions for the newsletter are welcome and can be made to Helen McConnell (H.M.McConnell@massey.ac.nz).
For previous issues visit: http://wildlife.massey.ac.nz/

NATIONAL OILED WILDLIFE RESPONSE TEAM -INTRODUCTIONS-

In the last edition of the OWR Newsletter we introduced the Massey University personnel. In this edition we will continue the trend by profiling our five technical advisors to the National Oiled Wildlife Response Team (NOWRT). These people each bring specific expertise to New Zealand's oiled wildlife response capability (as outlined below), and are contracted by Massey University as required.

Brent Stephenson

OWR - Field Assessment Advisor

Ecologist

Brent has been a birder since childhood, and in 2005 completed his Ph.D., studying the breeding biology of Australasian gannets in New Zealand. In 2003, Brent and a colleague rediscovered the "extinct" New Zealand storm-petrel. Now with support from National Geographic, he leads the team conducting further research on this enigmatic seabird.
His passion for travel, birds, and the ocean has led him to many corners of the world working on small 'Expedition' cruise ships. Brent has travelled from the Arctic to the Antarctic, including the Solomons, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, China, Americas, and Africa.
While in New Zealand, Brent conducts ecological research, conservation work, and co-owns and runs Wrybill Birding Tours, NZ. He lives near Napier on the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand.
Brent has been involved with Oiled Wildlife Response since 2004 when he started as Wildlife Co-ordinator for the Hawkes Bay. He has since joined the National Oiled Wildlife Response Team as a field assessment advisor.

Bill Dwyer

OWR - Facilities Advisor

Managing Director, DwyerTech Services, Palmerston North.

Bill has been involved with oiled wildlife response since 1999. His commercial facilities maintenance company, DwyerTech Services, provides a full range of construction services, including builders, plumbers, electricians, drainlayers, gasfitters and roofers. Bill holds registrations in four trades – Electrical Service Technician, Craftsman Gasfitter, Craftsman Plumber and Registered Drainlyer, his skills are invaluable when it comes to establishing emergency temporary oiled wildlife response facilities. . Bill was integral in designing and setting up both the mobile containerised Oiled Wildlife Response unit, as well as the permanent OWR facilities based at Massey University. Bill was involved with the Jody F Millenium Spill in Gisborne in 2002 and works closely with Massey to continuously improve New Zealand's OWR facilities and associated procedures. Bill has recently completed a "round-the-world" tour visiting OWR facilities in Europe and the US – see the article later in the newsletter for more details about this trip.

Jim Lilley

OWR - Operations Advisor

Maritime New Zealand's Small Craft Safety Advisor for the South Island

More than twenty years of experience working with marine birds and marine mammals has given Jim a solid background in the rescue and rehabilitation of these animals, with him having a particular soft spot for Hector's dolphins. Jim also has extensive Marine Search and Rescue experience, rescuing over 500 people over the years, and has been involved in all major (Tier 3) responses since the Don Wong 529 in 1998. He also assists with teaching oiled wildlife response and related topics to students and wildlife rehabilitators around New Zealand. In the event of an oil spill Jim would contribute by overseeing operational aspects of the response, with particular emphasis on managing field communications and training volunteers.

John Andrew

OWR - Operations Advisor

Programme Manager - Biodiversity Threats. Hawkes Bay Area Office, Department of Conservation.

John has been involved with oiled wildlife response since March 1996 when he took in approx 250 ducks & shags for six weeks, after a diesel spill in the Botanical Gardens, Christchurch.
Then in February 2005 another diesel spill occurred in Christchurch's Heathcote River whereby John oversaw the rehabilitation process under the auspices of the Canterbury Regional Council. During this incident 356 ducks, gulls & shags were captured with 270 surviving to be released.
After the 1996 spill John (along with Jim Lilley who was also involved) was invited by Richard Norman to participate in the Massey University oiled wildlife response team. From this point on John has attended the Don Wong 529 incident in 1998 & the Jody F Millennium incident in 2002. John feels honoured to be part of the expanding professional and knowledgeable oiled wildlife response team based at Massey University.

Phil Battley

Senior lecturer in the Ecology Group, Massey University

OWR - Capture and Field Assessment Advisor

Phil is an ornithologist based in the Ecology Group, Massey University, Palmerston North who works mostly on the biology of migratory shorebirds. His main research focuses on local and long-distance movements of individual birds, and how the colour of the breeding plumage in shorebirds is established and maintained. Phil's interest in intertidal birds has lead to research on intertidal invertebrates, and he is particularly fond of strolling across the vast sandy tidal flats on Farewell Spit. Phil is also an active birder and is on the council of the Ornithological Society of NZ.

BILL GOES INTERNATIONAL: OWR FACILITIES TOUR

Being the oiled wildlife response facilities advisor for the National Oiled Wildlife Response Team has its highlights as Bill Dwyer recently found when he arrived in Brussels, Belgium to be met by Hugo Nijkamp, the General Manager of the Sea Alarm Foundation. Arriving in Belgium marked the start of Bills three week tour of oiled wildlife response facilities in Europe and the United States. The aim of the trip was to observe facilities operated by other OWR groups and to bring home ideas for potential improvements to our own oiled wildlife response.
The Sea Alarm Foundation proved an excellent starting point to Bill's travels as this organisation oversees all aspects of OWR in Europe. Sea Alarm itself operates no hands-on OWR facilities, but focuses on securing international funding and raising awareness of OWR internationally. Hugo, as the General Manager, has a refreshing global perspective on all aspects of OWR which set Bill in good stead for the rest of his trip.

Hugo Nijkamp, Sea Alarm

From Brussels Bill travelled by train to the coastal Belgium town of Oostend where he caught up with Claude Velter who works with the organisation 'Vogelopvangcentrum' (translates from Dutch as 'bird relief centre'). Claude runs an OWR facility which treats 5000 oiled birds per annum. Casualties are admitted on a daily basis due to continuously high levels of hydrocarbon contaminant in the North Sea. Claude's facility is currently based in an old army barracks, but a modern new facility is under construction which aims to incorporate not only top quality treatment and rehabilitation facilities, but will also serve as an advocacy centre for OWR. At the new centre, controlled public observation and teaching facilities will support OWR through both education and fundraising via admission fees from those that visit.
From Oostend Bill travelled by TGV to Paris and on to Rochefort in the west of France. Here he was met by Anne-Laure Dugue from LPO who took Bill on a whirlwind tour of the rescue facilities she manages in La Rochelle. Anne-Laure oversees the operation of

two large articulated truck/trailer units which form the mobile oiled wildlife response facilities for France. The trailers both provide administration, stabilisation and bird wash areas. One trailer was designed and built by LPO, the other was donated by 'Wildpeace'. Motivation for the construction of these trailers was born out of the large 'Erika' oil spill in France which occurred in December 1999. Features of great interest to Bill in these units were the construction methods used and the manner in which they would be employed during a spill.

LPO mobile OWR trailer

From France Bill flew to Frankfurt, Germany. The postponement of his connecting flight to Helsinki due to fog meant an eight hour wait which proved to be a trial. However destination Finland was finally reached much to the relief of Bill and Timo Asanti who was meeting him at the airport! Timo who works for the Finnish Environment Institute and oversees OWR in Finland had an action packed itinerary planned to see Bill through the next few days. This included a fascinating visit to LAMOR, a factory that makes oil recovery equipment (boats, booms, skimmers, extractors, pumps etc) for the international market, a guided tour through the high security Morehouse factory which makes all manner of containerized equipment including the emergency response containers for the United Nations and… no trip to Finland is complete without a traditional Finnish sauna at a lakeside estate (Bill assures us that the countless beers that accompany the sweating are of course part of the tradition too!!).

The highlight in Finland (apart from the sauna) was a visit to the Porvoo Rescue Station which houses the national OWR facilities, along with paramedic and fire response equipment. The three mobile OWR containers had been set up especially for Bill's visit which allowed him to see first-hand how this particular operation would function during a spill.

Timo Asanti at LAMOR factory

Separate containers were provided for stabilisation, washing and drying of oiled birds, and marquees were then erected in which to establish rehabilitation enclosures. These facilities have not yet been put to the test, but will undoubtedly provide a solid foundation facility for OWR when needed. All-in-all Bill's travels with Timo covered an impressive 750 kilometres in two days by the time he was delivered back to the airport in Helsinki!

Mobile OWR containers at Porvoo Rescue Station

After flying to San Francisco, Bill caught a train to the University of Davis, California where the 'Oiled Wildlife Care Network' (OWCN) conference was to be held over the next two days. Day one of the conference proceeded with lecture style presentations on all aspects of OWR research and management. The following day consisted of a number of practical workshops that delegates could elect to attend. During the facilities workshop Bill visited the OWCN wildlife centre in Cordelia which is managed by the International Bird Rescue Research Centre (IBRRC) and was purpose built in 2001 as an oiled wildlife care and educational facility. The 930 m^2 facility can house up to 1,000 oiled birds at any one time. The afternoon was spent in a bird washing workshop where Bill got to try his hand at washing a duck using the vigorous washing technique that is recommended by OWCN. It was a very productive session with the duck exiting the wash tub in tip-top condition and Bill picking up a number of new wash techniques in the process.

OWCN Bird wash workshop

The following day was spent with Don Ballard the OWCN facilities expert who showed Bill through the permanent on-site facilities at UC Davis. As with the Belgium facility, here birds are admitted daily due to high baseline levels of contaminant off the California coast. The mobile aspect of this facility consists of pre-packaged response equipment which is held in stand-by mode ready for an immediate dispatch when notification of a spill is received. A caravan is ready to be deployed with the equipment packages to provide an immediate base from which a response can be managed. Bill was intrigued to see the contents of the equipment packages to gauge how they compare with our own equivalent first response equipment stores. The day concluded with an opportunity to meet the other OWCN staff at UC Davis which further added to the list of contacts that Bill had acquired to that point.
Bills final day on tour was spent doing some well deserved sight-seeing around San Francisco before flying home.

Don Ballard with OWCN rehab pool

The synopsis above provides only part of the picture, but the NZWHC and Bill would like to thank all those who hosted Bill and contributed to the success of his trip. The other part of the story is that Bill brought home many excellent ideas for how we can better be prepared for OWR here in New Zealand and we will be working to incorporate these ideas into our procedures through time. Watch this space…

All photos for this article courtesy of Bill Dwyer.

New OWR Trailer for Auckland

Under contract to Maritime New Zealand the New Zealand Wildlife Health Centre, Massey University is responsible for responding to oil spills in which wildlife have been contaminated or are at risk of becoming contaminated.
The unpredictable nature of these events, both spatially and temporally, calls for a high degree of contingency planning to allow for a quick and highly mobile response at the time of a spill. The New Zealand Wildlife Health Centre oversees basic equipment stores in each region of New Zealand which are designed to cater only for the first 24 hours of an oiled wildlife response. In addition to these existing regional supplies we aim to station mobile oiled wildlife response trailers strategically around New Zealand which will be dispatched to the oil spill scene soon after initial notification. These trailers will provide responders with supplementary equipment to cater for the second day of a response.
Coastal Enhancement funding from the Auckland Regional Council was recently secured to the sum of $18,050 + GST for the purpose of constructing a mobile oiled wildlife response trailer for the upper North Island regions. The funding also went towards stocking the trailer with appropriate response equipment for the second phase of an oiled wildlife response. When it is not on-scene at an oil spill, this trailer will be based at the Marine Pollution Response Service Depot, Maritime New Zealand, Te Atatu Peninsula, Auckland.
The other existing response trailers will be stationed at Palmerston North, Christchurch and Invercargill. All response trailers will be fully stocked and positioned at their designated locations by the end of 2009.

Revised Wildlife Chapter of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan

As part of the third review of the National Marine Oil Spill Contingency Plan the oiled wildlife response chapter was rewritten. The chapter is now more user friendly with less operational detail, to better reflect the purpose and format of the wider national plan. The rewritten wildlife chapter has recently been circulated to Regional Councils for inclusion in regional oil pollution contingency plans. The implementation of this chapter regionally will in effect standardise oiled wildlife response plans across New Zealand.

OWR Preparations in Southland

The following article was kindly contributed by Kineret Yardena, Environment Southland.

Oiled Wildlife Response Team Gets Ready

While oil spills cannot be predicted, they can be anticipated and planned for. That is why a team of eight gathered at Environment Southland in mid December to check supplies and review procedures for how to best rehabilitate wildlife in the event of a tier 2 or tier 3 oil spill disaster.

Senior land sustainability officer Gary Morgan of Environment Southland hosted Helen McConnell and Bill Dwyer of the Massey University Oiled Wildlife Response Team during their one-day visit.

Joining the group were May and Russell Evans, two passionate ornithologists who have established 1½ acres of Otatara native bush, drizzled in rat poison, to serve as habitat for native birds and as a sanctuary for those injured among them that need healing.

Photo: Kineret Yardena

After the group restocked the regional wildlife blue box, normally kept at South Port, Bluff, they visited the Invercargill City Council's nursery to assess its potential as an emergency treatment and rehabilitation centre for oiled wildlife.

Mr Dwyer, facilities technical advisor to the Massey University team, inspected the grounds, water supply, power, access, lighting and accommodation. Meanwhile, the others familiarized themselves with the space and its provisions, discussing how the facility—which supplies Queen's Park with its flowers, trees and shrubbery—might rapidly be converted into an emergency relief centre for oiled wildlife.

Mr Dwyer called the nursery "an excellent facility" as he noted the site's access to the town water supply and its robust drainage structures. "The key things you're after when determining a site for wildlife rehab are hard standing parking, places to wash birds such as glass houses, wide open spaces for pools and areas for administration," Mr Dwyer said. "Also you want a place with clear boundaries, flat land, and somewhere that is not industrial."

Assessing the Invercargill City Council nursery
Photo: Kineret Yardena

Mr Dwyer and Ms McConnell also investigated potential rehabilitation sites in Tuatapere and Te Anau, as ideally several locations around Southland would be available to double as emergency rehab centres.

"If they've been oiled, then the birds won't survive in the wild without treatment," Ms McConnell said, "so we have an obligation to bring them in and treat them and return them to the wild."

"It's not that we want them to become captive wildlife," she added. "What we want is for them to rejoin their breeding populations. But they simply cannot do that without some kind of human intervention."

Local News in Brief

Diesel in Fiordland

On Thursday, 27 Nov 2008 the tourist vessel the Waverley was holed in the vicinity of the Shelter Islands, Doubtful Sound. All ten persons on board were picked up by another vessel which attempted to tow the Waverley up the Sound towards Deep Cove. Whilst under tow it sank in deep water near Matai Island with 700 litres of diesel onboard.

From a wildlife perspective the concern was mainly for the nationally endangered Fiordland crested penguins which had a known breeding site approximately 11 km from the slick. Field assessments were hindered slightly by bad weather, but a Department of Conservation vessel and helicopter were able to assess the situation on Saturday by which time the spill had dispersed naturally (aided by windy conditions) and there were no signs of any oiled or distressed wildlife.

San Cuvier follow-up

The successful Salvage of the San Cuvier, the fishing vessel which was grounded off Opotiki on 27 July 2008, was completed by 24 December 2008. The vessel was cut up in situ and airlifted ashore in sections. A heavy lift Helicopter was employed by the

salvage contractor to transfer the larger sections of the Hull and Machinery.
Brian Spake the Regional on Scene Commander for oil spill response in the Bay of Plenty is pleased to report that there was no release of hydro-carbons or any other pollutants into the environment.
Effective communication was maintained throughout the entire operation to keep local residents and Iwi up to date with progress. Representatives from both affected Iwi were involved in all decision making throughout this process. That relationship has established positive points of contact for the future where consultation and discussion could be necessary on any issue.

Wildlife Society Conference 2008
The Wildlife Society of the New Zealand Vet Association Conference was hosted by the New Zealand Wildlife Health Centre at Massey University on 5 – 7 December 2008. This conference included over twenty high quality wildlife presentations as well as a series of practical workshops aimed at all veterinary practitioners interested in wildlife. A total of 12 presentations focussed on seabirds, coastal reptiles and marine mammals so were relevant to oiled wildlife response in New Zealand. A workshop on marine mammal post mortem was also conducted. These elements contributed to a very informative and successful event.

Upcoming Events

OWR training course at Massey University.
The next oiled wildlife response course is to be held at Massey University, Palmerston North on 29 – 30 April 2009. Invites to National Oiled Wildlife Response Team members required to participate have been sent. For those whose attendance is not required, you are invited to attend an evening presentation on a topic of OWR interest on the preceding Tuesday evening. The presentation will be given by Curt Clumpner from the International Bird Rescue Research Centre, Oregon, USA. Curt is a pre-eminent figure in international OWR and will no doubt treat attendees to an interesting and entertaining evening. Details are:

Evening OWR presentation
Curt Clumpner, IBRRC
7 pm, 28 April 2009
Wharerata Function Centre, Massey University, Palmerston North
Please RSVP before 9 April.

Attendance is free and a finger dinner will be served; however we are unable to assist with travel costs associated with attending this evening event.

Interspill Conference 2009
The next Interspill Conference will be held in Marseille, France on 12-14 May 2009. Sea Alarm is pleased to announce that it will co-chair the session on Environmental Impacts and Restoration. It will also host an exhibition booth where it will provide information on its activities and those of other wildlife response organisations. For further details please visit: www.interspill.com

Effects of Oil on Wildlife Conference 2009
Sea Alarm together with the Estonian Fund for Nature and *Oil Spill Response Limited* will host the 10th Effects of Oil on Wildlife Conference (EOW) in 2009. The Conference will be organised in close cooperation with the founders of the Conference series, the International Bird Rescue and Research Centre and Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research Centre, and will be held in Tallinn, Estonia from the 5th to 9th October, 2009. Further details and information can be found at www.eowconference09.org

WDA & WS-NZVA Joint Conference 2009
The New Zealand Wildlife Health Centre, Massey University is pleased to announce that a joint conference of the Australasian Section Wildlife Disease Association and the Wildlife Society of the New Zealand Veterinary Association will be held on 10 – 16 December 2009.
The conference will be convened amongst the picturesque surrounds at 'Woodstock Lodge' in the nature-lovers paradise of the Catlins, South Otago, New Zealand (www.woodstocklodge.co.nz).
Registration forms and the call for papers, along with all additional conference information will be posted on http://wildlife.massey.ac.nz in the coming months. Remember to keep an eye on the website for 'Early-bird' registration deals.
We look forward to preparing a top quality six day conference program. The first three days of which will have a strong New Zealand focus in line with the NZVA Wildlife Societies past programs, the remainder of the program will have a broader focus on wildlife disease issues.

More Interesting Web-Links

Sea Alarm Foundation
http://www.sea-alarm.org/
LAMOR
http://www.lamor.fi/
Helsinki Commission
http://www.helcom.fi/
Morehouse containers
http://www.morehouse.fi/eng/cfmldocs/
Oil Spill Response Limited
http://www.oilspillresponse.com/