

**Introduction**

Cameroon is located on the border between Central and West Africa. Its coastline is 402 km long, extending from the Akwayafe River near the border of Nigeria in the northwest to the River Campo near the border with Equatorial Guinea in the southwest. There are three coastal regions (Sud, Sud Ouest, and Littoral) whose coastlines encompass marshes, estuaries and intertidal mudflats, mangroves, sandy beaches, and rocky shorelines.

The monsoon season runs from March to October with higher average rainfall along the northern coastline. Coastal areas supporting significant marine life include the mangrove swamps of Rio del Rey on the Equatorial Guinea border, the Douala-Edea Wildlife Reserve which encompasses another important mangrove swamp as well as an estuarine/river system, and Lake Ossa Wildlife Reserve adjacent to the Lower Sanaga River basin/Douala-Edea Wildlife Reserve.

The three major ports in Cameroon are Douala, Limbé and Kribi. In addition, the Chad-Cameroon pipeline runs from the port at Kribi to Kome in landlocked Chad, creating an inland spill risk along the 890 km of pipeline through the centre of the country, passing through the cities of Kribi and Yaounde, crossing into Chad not far from the village of Dompla.

**At-risk wildlife**

Avian Species – Herons, egrets, and shorebirds such as sandpipers, plovers and lapwings, account for the greatest number of coastal species. African skimmers, grey pratincoles, open-billed storks and common greenshanks found in the largest numbers. Species of concern include the sociable lapwing (critically endangered), black-crowned crane, red knot, curlew sandpiper, great snipe, marbled teal, African skimmer, black-tailed and bar-tailed godwit, Damara tern and Eurasian curlew.

Marine mammals – Striped, bottlenose, common and Atlantic humpback dolphin, humpback and sperm whale, and African manatee are found in the nearshore waters and estuaries of Cameroon. Manatees may also use the coastline to migrate between freshwater inlets. Of these species, the African manatee, the Atlantic humpback dolphin (Gulf of Guinea subpopulation, also called the Cameroon dolphin) and the sperm whale are listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN. Humpback whales may calve in the waters off Cameroon and are known to be in the area between July and October.

Marine reptiles – Four species of turtle are common on the Cameroon coast- leatherback, olive ridley, green and hawksbill. Leatherback and olive ridley nest on Cameroon beaches between September and April, from Indinaua to Limbe, along the Douala-Edea Wildlife Reserve and south of Kribi to Campo. Green (rare local nesting) and hawksbill (non-nesting) turtles forage within mangroves and along rocky shores. At least two species of crocodile, West African dwarf and Nile, are seen in Cameroon.

**Regional Seas**

South Atlantic Ocean

Central and West Africa Regional Sea

**Past experience**

No major spills so far have occurred in Cameroon waters. Minor spills recorded in Cameroon include the tanker Petro Bousca, the spill at SONARA (National Oil Refinery Company) in 2004, caused by a leakage when crude oil was being pumped from a tanker to storage tanks onshore, a spill in Kribi in September 2005, a January 2007 spill at the Chad-Cameroon pipeline offshore terminal and a 2013 spill at the SONARA waste water treatment facility.

There is no reference of oiled wildlife problems during these spills.

**Response: the role of the authorities**

The Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures-Comité de Pilotage et de Suivi des Pipelines (SNH-CPSP,

National Hydrocarbons Corporation-Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee) is the competent national authority for oil pollution preparedness and response under the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP).

The Secretariat of the CPSP, which includes representatives from various government ministries such as Environment, Fisheries, Law and Order, Mines and Health etc., oversees response to Tier 3 spills. SNH has stockpiles of Tier 1 response equipment at three naval bases in the country.

Other agencies, industry organisations, oil companies and port authorities hold spill response equipment for use within their jurisdiction. A number of oil companies operating in Cameroon have an Emergency Response Allocation Agreement for sharing resources during a Tier 2 response.

Cameroon Oil Transport Company (COTCO) has primary responsibility for Tier 1 incidents along the Chad-Cameroon pipeline.

### **Oiled wildlife response**

#### Formal guidelines?

There are no formal guidelines for oiled wildlife response within the NOSCP.

#### Response objectives and strategy

N/A

#### Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

It is likely that rehabilitation would be allowed, however capacity is extremely limited within the country.

#### Impact assessment

The Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) and the Ministry of Fisheries (MINEPIA) under the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINNEPDED) oversee impact assessment.

There are a number of conservation NGOs and universities working on field assessment of marine wildlife (see Wildlife Responders) that would likely be utilised to assist in this process. For example, the African Marine Mammal Conservation Organisation (AMMCO) has experience in performing marine mammal necropsies.

#### Notification and early response

There is no formal process for notification and early response to wildlife in the NOSCP.

### **Wildlife responders**

There are no organisations with experience in oiled wildlife response in Cameroon. There are, however, several conservation and biodiversity NGOs which may be able to assist in assessment and other aspects of response.

The University of Dschang was active in manatee research for a number of years. The African Marine Mammal Conservation Organisation (AMMCO) is active in manatee research and conservation and is expanding its work to include coastal cetaceans and sharks in addition to manatees. AMMCO has a network of fishermen along the coast who report opportunistic sightings and strandings of marine wildlife via a mobile application-SIREN. SIREN users can report oil spills and any affected animals through the app.

The Réseau des Acteurs de la Sauvegarde des Tortues Marines en Afrique Centrale (RASTOMA, Sea Turtle Network of Central Africa-formerly PROTOMAC) and Project K'udu Awu are involved in sea turtle conservation.

The Cameroon Biodiversity Conservation Society, the local Birdlife International affiliate, may be able to assist with response to seabirds. The Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS) is primarily involved in mangrove conservation but does some work with sea turtles.

The Limbe Wildlife Centre, which is affiliated with the Limbe Botanical Park and Zoological Gardens, has a small veterinary hospital with a focus on primates and parrots. They may be able to provide veterinary

assistance and equipment.

**Cooperation between stakeholders**

There is cooperation between many of the NGOs listed above. A number of the groups also work with the University of Dschang, the Halieutic Institute of Yabassi, the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, and the Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development.

Cameroon is a signatory to the Abidjan Convention for cooperation in combatting pollution in the West and Central African Region and the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Program (GCLME) Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan. Cameroon and Nigeria have cooperated in trans-boundary oil spill response exercises.

**Permanent facilities**

There are no permanent facilities for oiled wildlife rehabilitation in Cameroon.

Project K'udu Awu may be able to care for a very limited number of sea turtles. AMMCO, which is in the process of developing a manatee rehabilitation centre in the Lake Ossa region, works in partnership with a manatee specialist from the African Aquatic Conservation Fund based in Senegal, who has experience in rehabilitation of this species.

Metabiota, a laboratory in Yaounde, has reliable cold chain processes in place and equipment for handling medical samples.

**Current processes**

In 2014, a Global Initiative-West, Central and Southern Africa (GI-WACAF) supported workshop included refresher training in oil spill response, a national exercise to test the NOSCP, an action plan to follow recommendations made during the exercise and an update of the NOSCP.

In 2015 there was a bilateral exercise with Cameroon and Nigeria to establish an oil spill communications process between the two countries, to test that process and to develop methods for requesting assistance.

No wildlife response component was included in the workshop or the exercise.

**Documentation and references**

General references

General References

Cameroon NOSCP

ITOPF Country Profile

GI-WACAF Country Profile

Birdlife DataZone

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