

**Introduction**

With a total coastline of 2,389 km, the marine territory of the Federal Republic of Germany includes the North Sea/Wadden Sea in the northwest and the Bodden Sea/Baltic Sea in the northeast. Low, marshy wetlands with dikes and mudflats predominate in the North Sea, which includes the North and East Frisian Island groups. The Baltic coastline, where higher elevations and some steep cliffs predominate, includes two large islands - Rügen and Usedom. Both seas are known for their abundant bird and seal populations.

**At Risk Wildlife**

**Avian Species** - millions of birds of more than 50 different species are found in the Wadden Sea at various times, with more than 1% of the total northwestern European breeding populations of 21 species nesting there. A further 21 species also nest in the region. Black scoter, ferruginous duck, lesser white-fronted goose, black-tailed godwit and Eurasian curlew are among the IUCN listed species of concern.

**Marine mammals** - grey and common (harbour) seals are found in significant numbers in German waters. A number of cetaceans are also found off the coast of Germany, however the harbour porpoise is the species which strands most commonly. Fin and sperm whales have also come ashore in Germany but are unlikely to be a concern during a spill.

**Marine Reptiles** - while five species of sea turtle have been recorded in the North Sea, only the leatherback is regularly recorded feeding in the region. Strandings are extremely rare, thus unlikely to be a concern during an oil spill.

**Regional Seas**

North East Atlantic Ocean (including the Wadden Sea)

Baltic Sea (including the Bodden Sea).

**Past experience**

Pallas (1998). The heavy fuel oil spill in Schleswig-Holstein caused the oiling of an estimated 2,500 birds, of which 1,200 were found alive. Efforts were not well coordinated and success was limited, despite the presence of both national and international oiled wildlife responders.

Duncan Island (2007). At the time of the spill, a draft local response plan for Lower Saxony, where the spill occurred, was available. Wildlife response activities were led by the veterinary authority Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (LAVES).

Mystery spills (2001, 2004 and 2008). Schleswig-Holstein experienced three spills. In 2001 and 2004 Westküstenpark St. Peter-Ording managed the responses, getting assistance from International Bird Rescue in 2001 and sending a majority of the birds to De Fugelpits in the Netherlands in 2004. De Fugelpits also accepted many of the birds from the 2008 incident.

In addition, staff from Pro Bird e.V. (see Wildlife Responders) responded during the Erika (1999/2000), Prestige (2002), Tricolor (2003) and other international incidents.

**Response: the role of the authorities**

The competent national authority for major oil spill management is the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME), or Havariekommando, located in Cuxhaven. Section 2 (FB2) of this centre is responsible for offshore response, aerial surveillance and international affairs. Section 3 (FB3) is responsible for response to spills in coastal waters and beach cleaning operations.

The CCME is a joint agency of the Federal Waterways and Shipping Board (WSV) and the five Coastal States of Bremen, Hamburg, Niedersachsen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein allowing for cooperative response.

Onshore response, including oiled wildlife response, is the responsibility of the coastal Bundesländer. Hamburg and Bremen are small and likely to adapt guidelines developed by the three larger Bundesländer. Niedersachsen has developed joint response activities with Schleswig-Holstein.

In Schleswig-Holstein the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Areas is the responsible authority for wildlife response. In Lower Saxony, LAVES is working on this issue. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern either the Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz (on behalf of the Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumer

Protection and the Ministry for Environment, Energy and Climate Protection), or the Lebensmittelsicherheit und Veterinärwesen would take the lead.

## **Oiled wildlife response**

### Formal guidelines?

Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony) have published guidelines for treatment of live, oiled animals. A draft plan is under development for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

A framework plan for all 5 Bundeslander is under development, with the development process being assisted by CCME.

### Response objectives and strategy

The Schleswig-Holstein guidelines cite animal welfare as the reason for euthanasia as the primary response but also provide strict criteria under which rehabilitation might be allowed in the future.

The focus of Niedersachsen is to try to rehabilitate oiled animals, in combination with euthanasia.

The strategy for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is under development in the draft oiled wildlife response plan.

### Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

See response objectives and strategy

### Impact assessment

The ARGE BLMP is the Federal government/Länder coordination group for the North Sea and Baltic marine environmental monitoring programme and would likely lead impact assessment activities.

### Notification and early response

There does not appear to be any clear established procedures for notification and early response. This should be addressed in the framework plan being developed for all five Bundeslander.

## **Wildlife responders**

Pro Bird e.V. (a cooperative effort of Project Blue Sea e.V., Wildtierstation Hamburg gGmbH, Robbenzentrum Föhr gGmbH, Paasmühle e.V., Wildtierauffangstation Rastede e.V., Wildtierhilfe Lüneburger Heide e.V. and Tierschutz Aktiv Friesland und Umzu e.V.) have responded both in Germany and in other parts of Europe, working to international oiled wildlife response standards.

Pro Bird is an active member of the European Oiled Wildlife Responders and participated in the development of the European Oiled Wildlife Response Manual.

Tierschutzbund operates a wildlife rehabilitation centre in Schleswig-Holstein and can accommodate approximately 200 oiled birds.

## **Cooperation between stakeholders**

Cooperation between NGOs and authorities is developing under guidance from the Havariekommando.

Germany is a signatory to the Bonn Agreement, Helsinki Convention, DenGerNeth (Denmark Germany Netherlands) Agreement for response in the Wadden Sea and part of the North Sea, SweDenGer (Sweden Denmark Germany) for response in the southwestern Baltic and a bilateral agreement with Poland for response in the Pomeranian Bight.

## **Permanent facilities**

Several wildlife rehabilitation centres have space, equipment and capabilities for limited responses. No permanent national facilities or equipment exist for oiled wildlife care.

## **Current processes**

In Schleswig-Holstein there is a training course developed for authority approved personnel on beach collection of oiled wildlife.

## **Documentation and references**

General references

General references

ITOPF Country Profile

Birdlife International website (accessed June 2014)

Baltic Breeding Birds (HELCOM)  
Baltic Marine Mammals (HELCOM)  
HELCOM Redlist

Progress with the integration of oiled wildlife response into response planning by 2013 (Background document for 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting)

Report on the first stage of the development of the Baltic Sea Oiled Wildlife Rehabilitators group (2014)

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