

**Introduction**

The Republic of Liberia on the west coast of Africa is bordered by Sierra Leone to the northwest, Guinea to the north, Cote d'Ivoire to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the southwest. (The country's 580 km of coastline includes sandy and rocky beaches, lagoons, riverine estuaries and wetlands, including mangrove swamps that are home to a variety of wildlife both migratory and resident. Coastal counties from west to east are: Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Monserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Sinoe, Grand Cru, and Maryland.

The counties of Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Sinoe and Grand Cru host important sea turtle nesting sites. Lake Piso (a large coastal lagoon) and the Mafa and Mano Rivers in Grand Cape Mount provide habitat for African manatees. Important coastal bird habitat is found in the Grand Cape Mount (Lake Piso), River Cess and Sinoe (Cess and Senkwen River estuaries) Administrative Divisions.

*Avian Species* - a variety of waterbirds, both migratory and resident, utilise coastal areas of Liberia, particularly its lagoons and river estuaries. Shorebird, wader, and seabird species of concern include the African skimmer, Damara tern, Eurasian curlew, great snipe, curlew sandpiper and red knot. Piscivorous and coastal scavenger birds of prey such as the critically endangered hooded vulture may be at risk from feeding in contaminated areas.

*Marine mammals* - African manatees are found along the coast and in Lake Piso. African clawless otters and marsh mongoose inhabit coastal marine environments. More than 20 species of whale and dolphin have been recorded offshore but strandings are rare and few coastal species are common here.

*Marine Reptiles* - five species of sea turtle are found in Liberian waters-green, olive Ridley, hawksbill, leatherback and loggerhead. Four of these nest on Liberian beaches-green, olive Ridley, hawksbill, and leatherback. Despite reports of loggerheads nesting in Grand Cape Mount County, scientific surveys have not found any evidence of them nesting in the country. Hawksbill turtles are found mainly from Rivercess to the Cote d'Ivoire border. Green turtles nest mainly in Grand Bassa, but, along with leatherbacks and olive Ridelys, are found along much of the Liberian coast.

**Regional Seas**

Atlantic Ocean, West and Central Africa,  
Gulf of Guinea Large Marine Ecosystem (LME #28)

**Past experience**

There have been no major spills in Liberian waters.

**Response: the role of the authorities**

Liberia is in the process of developing their National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP), under which the Liberian Maritime Authority (LIMA) will be responsible for oil spill preparedness and

response.

Other government agencies (e.g. the Ministry of Land, Mines and Energy, the Bureau of Maritime Affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Bureau of Fisheries, and the Liberian Petroleum Refining Corporation) will likely have roles in response actions under the NOSCP.

### **Oiled wildlife response**

#### Formal guidelines?

The NOSCP under development does not include a plan for wildlife response at this time.

#### Response objectives and strategy

N/A

#### Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

Given the variety of conservation actions underway, it is likely that rehabilitation would be allowed, provided there are resources (personnel, equipment, facilities) available.

#### Impact assessment

Sensitivity maps are being created as part of the development of the NOSCP but, at this time, it is not clear which agencies or organisations would be involved in oiled wildlife impact assessment should a spill occur. The Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for wildlife protection and the National Bureau of Fisheries are responsible for marine and coastal wildlife, thus both may be involved in impact assessment.

#### Notification and early response

There is no process presently in place to notify relevant parties or to initiate early response to wildlife in the event of an oil spill.

### **Wildlife responders**

There are no wildlife rehabilitation organisations in Liberia. A number of conservation NGOs work with coastal wildlife. Sea Turtle Watch Liberia, Save My Future (SAMFU) Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Save Our Species (SOS) Liberia are involved in sea turtle monitoring and conservation. There have been several manatee monitoring and awareness projects conducted in the Lake Piso and Maffa River area. Farmers Associated to Conserve the Environment (FACE) personnel and local Community Based Environmental Club (CBEC) trained by them may be able to assist with some aspects of manatee response.

### **Cooperation between stakeholders**

The marine turtle conservation NGOs listed above work cooperatively with the EPA and the National Bureau of Fisheries and with each other. The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia works with the Forestry Development Authority (Government of Liberia) and with a number of international conservation organisations.

Liberia is a signatory to the Abidjan Convention and the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan but neither is integrated into the NOSCP. Liberia is also a signatory to the MoU with PENAF (Ports Environmental Network Africa).

### **Permanent facilities**

There are no permanent facilities for wildlife rehabilitation in Liberia, however, the various conservation organisations active in the country will likely be able to assist the relevant government agencies in developing temporary facilities should a spill occur.

## **Current processes**

There are no current processes in place for oiled wildlife response.

## **Documentation and references**

General references

General References

Liberia ITOPF Country Profile

Liberia GI-WACAF Country Profile

Liberia Birdlife Data Zone Country Profile

Sea Turtle Watch Liberia

Rufford Small Grant Foundation Liberia Conservation Project Reports

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