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Introduction
Portugal is located in Southern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula, bordered by Spain in the north and northwest and by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and south. Two autonomous archipelagos, the Azores and the Madeira Islands, both located in the Atlantic, contribute to the approximately 1860 km of coastline.

Sharp cliffs, sandy and rocky beaches, and estuarine regions such as the Rios Sado, Tejo and Vouga contribute to the varied coastal geography.

At-risk wildlife
Avian Species - Many coastal and estuarine areas of Portugal and its islands provide good habitat for migratory, breeding and resident populations of seabirds, waders, and shorebirds. The Ria de Aviero Lagoon along the central coast, the Tagus (Teju) estuary near Lisbon and the Sado estuary near Setúbal, as well as the Faro Lagoon, Ria Formosa and Castro Marim in the Algarve are key mainland bird habitats. Offshore, the Berlengas (north of Lisbon), Madeiras and Azores archipelagos are important for seabird species.
Species of special concern include the Critically Endangered Zino's petrel and Balearic shearwater, and the Desertas petrel, Monteiro's storm petrel, and common pochard, and Atlantic puffin all of which are listed as Vulnerable species. The Portuguese Red Data book lists further species of concern locally.

Marine mammals - nearly 30 species of whales and dolphins are regularly seen in Portuguese waters and strandings are common. The bottlenose dolphin populations in the Tagus and Sado estuaries, and the population of common dolphins found near Cape St. Vincent in the Algarve would be at risk from a local spill in their areas. The large variety of cetaceans in the Azores would also be of concern. The harbour porpoise population present in Portuguese nearshore waters, which is under consideration as an isolated and distinct subspecies, is considered threatened.

The Endangered Mediterranean monk seals found in the Madeira archipelago present a significant concern should an oil spill occur in their habitat. Common, grey and hooded seals are occasionally seen in Portugal and the Eurasian otter population would be of concern in areas where they utilise coastal waters, including lagoons and estuaries.

Marine Reptiles - loggerhead turtles are common in the waters of continental Portugal, with green and Kemp's Ridley turtles more scarce but regular visitors. Leatherback turtles, including migratory adults, are found year round but most of the other species in the region are foraging juveniles. There are no confirmed nesting sites in Portugal.

Regional Seas
North Atlantic Ocean

Past experience
Portugal has experienced a number of medium-to-large sized spills including the Aragon (1989), Cercal (1994) and Coral Bulker (2000). None of these included oiled wildlife in any significant numbers. In the aftermath of the Prestige oil spill (2002), Portugal did not experience direct oil pollution, but 140 live and 700 dead birds washed ashore. Most of the live casualties were brought to the temporary wildlife rehabilitation centre in Galicia, Spain, rather than being treated in Portugal.

Each year, from one to a few hundreds of oiled birds are found on Portuguese beaches, due to chronic pollution.

Response: the role of the authorities
The Direcção-Geral de Autoridade Maritima (DGAM), under the auspices of the National Maritime Authority (Navy) and Ministry of Defense is the competent national authority for oil spill response under the Plano Mar Limpio (the national oil spill contingency plan). Small spills are handled by local port administration, medium sized spills by the Chefe do Departamento Maritimo (Local Maritime Authority) and the DGAM oversees all large spill responses.

Oiled wildlife response
Formal guidelines?
There is no formal oiled wildlife response plan in place in Portugal, however the Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e Florestas (ICNF), the national authority tasked with managing protected fauna, provides guidelines and response plans for wildlife incidents, including oil spills, on a case-by-case basis. ICNF also certifies rehabilitation facilities for response to oil spills.

Response objectives and strategy
The ICNF, with cooperating stranding teams and rehabilitation facilities, is developing an oiled wildlife response strategy, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

Euthanasia or rehabilitation?
Rehabilitation would be the primary response, with euthanasia utilised under specifically defined criteria.

Impact assessment
The Portuguese Environment Institute would likely work with the Ministry for the Environment on impact assessment.

Notification and early response
While there is no formal notification and response protocol for oiled wildlife within the Plano Mar Limpio, there is a network of response teams for marine mammals and turtles, certified by the ICNF and coordinated throughout most of continental Portugal by the Sociedad Portuguesa da Vida Salvage and ECOMARE-Aveiro University. The same response network coordinates seabird stranding response along approximately 200km of the central coast of the country. It is assumed that the ICNF would be notified by the DGAM should there be a spill involving wildlife.

Wildlife responders
There is a network of wildlife rehabilitation facilities (Rede Nacional de Centros Rehabilitacão) coordinated and certified by ICNF working in cooperation with the regional stranding teams to respond to marine wildlife incidents, including oil spills. (see Permanent Facilities and Current Processes).

Cooperation between stakeholders
The rehabilitation facility and stranding team networks cooperate under the guidance of the ICNF, the national coordinator for all certified wildlife rescue centres.

Permanent facilities
There are six wildlife rehabilitation centres in Portugal in the Rede Nacional de Centros Rehabilitacão with varying capacity to care for oiled wildlife, either as triage centres or for longer term care. Four facilities (Parque Biológico in the north, LxCRAS in Lisbon, CRASSA in Alentejo and RIAS in the Algarve) rehabilitate seabirds. CRAM-ECOMARE in central Portugal (see current processes) rehabilitates all marine species (mammals, turtles and birds) and Porto de Abrigo in the Algarve rehabilitates seals and sea turtles and responds to cetacean strandings but does not have capacity at this time to rehabilitate these species.

Current processes
ICNF and the rehabilitation and stranding response network are developing standard processes for responding to large wildlife incidents, including oil spills. CRAM-ECOMARE (formerly CRAM-Q), a cooperative project of the Sociedad Portuguesa de Vida Salvagem, Aveiro University and Oceanario de Lisboa, has a facility in central Portugal designed to be the National Centre for oiled wildlife response in continental Portugal. A mobile response unit is under development (expected completion in 2017), which will expand response capabilities to other regions of Portugal and Spain.

Documentation and references
General references
General References
ITOPF Country Profile
Birdlife International Country Profile
Funcionamiento de los Centros Ibéricos de Rehabilitación de Fauna Marina (MarPro Conservação de espécies marinhas protegidas em Portugal continental) Report on marine fauna rehabilitation centres on the Iberian peninsula (LIFE09NAT/PT/000038 Project)

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