

Introduction

The Kingdom of Sweden, on the Scandinavian Peninsula in Northern Europe, is bordered by the Baltic Sea (Gulf of Bothnia in the east, Kattegat and Skagerrak in the west), Norway (west) and Finland (north/north-east). Its 3,218 km of coastline is comprised largely of small islands and reefs to the east and southwest, with sand beaches predominating in the south.

In terms of risk, the Gulf of Bothnia ranks low as it does not have major shipping routes crossing it. Many small spills and chronic pollution events occur each year in the Swedish part of the Baltic, most commonly along the coastline between Västra Götaland in the west (Skagerrak) and Stockholm.

At Risk Wildlife

Avian Species - the Baltic Sea is an important wintering area for seabirds, with numbers approaching ten million birds of about 30 different species. Species of concern, including long-tailed duck, common and velvet scoter, red-breasted merganser and common eider, winter in the area in significant numbers. HELCOM listed breeding species of concern include southern dunlin, ruff and greater scaup.

Marine mammals - Grey and common (harbour) seals, and harbour porpoise are the most common marine mammal species. Grey seal populations are found mainly in the Stockholm Archipelago and the Åland. Sea Ringed seals, while less numerous, are regularly seen in the Gulf of Bothnia.

Other species are rarely seen.

Marine Reptiles - sea turtles are rare in Swedish waters, and are thus, not a concern during an oil spill.

Regional Seas

Baltic Sea (including the Kattegat and Gulf of Bothnia)

North Sea (Skagerrak)

Past experience

To date, Sweden has experienced four major maritime emergencies:

The Volgoneft (1989), the Baltic Carrier (2001), the Fu Shan Hai (2003) and a spill resulting from a collision of two ships off the island of Tjörn (2011). An oiled wildlife activity response was mounted during the Fu Shan Hai incident with a reported 6-7,00 birds oiled, 3000 of which were mute swans. Both rescue and field euthanasia were attempted but these efforts resulted in many of the birds scattering over 200 km of coastline. In total 67 birds were captured and taken into a rehabilitation centre, of which 42 survived to be released. Less than 100 birds were collected dead from beaches. The 2011 incident resulted in a small number of birds being taken to Gothenburg Bird Centre (Göteborgs Fågelcentral). Details of total birds affected by the spill and success rates are not available.

Response: the role of the authorities

The Swedish Coast Guard, under the Ministry of Defence has national responsibility for pollution incidents both at sea and in the Vänern, Vättern and Mälaren Lakes. Local municipalities are responsible for shoreline, municipal harbour and some private harbour cleanup. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) supports the municipalities with R&D, training and by supplying additional response equipment in regional stockpiles.

MSB is also the responsible wildlife authority. MSB allows the Katastrofhjälpen Fåglar och Vilt Riksförbundet (KFV-Riksförbundet or Swedish Wildlife Rehabilitators Association) to respond to oiled wildlife, however, membership in KFV is concentrated in southern Sweden.

Oiled wildlife responseFormal guidelines?

There are no formal guidelines in place at the national level, but it was recently decided that the Swedish Environment institute is responsible for developing (as of 2015) a national plan for oiled wildlife response.

Response objectives and strategy

Objectives and strategy will be developed as part of the planning process.

Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

KFV is allowed to rehabilitate oiled wildlife but field euthanasia may continue to be utilised as well.

Impact assessment

The Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket) would likely oversee impact assessment, advising municipalities and county boards as needed. Databases and sensitivity maps are in place at the regional level. The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is commissioned by the Swedish government to perform environmental monitoring and assessment, and thus would likely be involved in impact assessment.

The Swedish Ornithological Society, a Birdlife International partners, may be involved in data collection as well.

Notification and early response

The Swedish Coast Guard, the spill notification point, would inform the State Environmental Service in the event that wildlife is involved.

Wildlife responders

KFV-Riksförbund are the recognised wildlife responders. KFV is an association of a large number of rehabilitators who work on animals mainly in a volunteer capacity. The organisation's membership is largely concentrated in the south of the country, with several rehabilitation centres having resources in place and varying levels of experience.

Cooperation between stakeholders

KFV works well with the relevant government agencies, other rehabilitation facilities and stakeholders, and neighbouring country responders, and has developed mutual oiled wildlife response guidelines with Estonia and Finland.

Sweden is a signatory to the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM), the Copenhagen Agreement (with Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway), the Bonn Agreement for the North Sea, and a trilateral agreement SweDenGer (with Denmark and Germany) for response in the southwestern Baltic.

Permanent facilities

There are a number of wildlife rehabilitation facilities with capacity to care for up to 100 birds. Many of the groups work cooperatively within Sweden and have supported each other during spill or chronic oil responses.

Current processes

As part of HELCOM requirements, Sweden is in the process of integrating oiled wildlife response into their National Contingency Plan.

It was recently decided that the Swedish Environment institute is responsible for developing a national plan for oiled wildlife response.

Documentation and references

General references

ITOPF Country Profile

EnSaCo Project Report (<http://projects.centralbaltic.eu/project/418-ensaco-oil-spill>)

Baltic Breeding Birds List (HELCOM)

HELCOM Redlist

Baltic Marine Mammals (HELCOM)

Progress with the integration of oiled wildlife response into response planning by 2013 (HELCOM report)

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

Terms and Conditions

These Country Wildlife Profiles are provided in good faith as a guide only and are based on information obtained from a variety of sources over a period of time. This information is subject to change and should, in each case, be independently verified before reliance is placed on it. Country Wildlife Profiles may have been issued solely to incorporate additional or revised information under one heading only. Each Profile has therefore not necessarily been completely verified or updated as at the stated Date of Issue.

Sea Alarm hereby excludes, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, any and all liability to any person, corporation or other entity for any loss, damage or expense resulting from reliance or use of these Country Wildlife Profiles.

© Sea Alarm Foundation, 2014

These Country Wildlife Profiles may be reproduced by any means for noncommercial distribution without addition, deletion or amendment, provided an acknowledgment of the source is given and these Terms & Conditions are reproduced in full.

These Country Wildlife Profiles may not be reproduced without the prior written permission of Sea Alarm Foundation either for commercial distribution or with addition, deletion or amendment.