

## Introduction

Algeria, located on the north coast of Africa bordering Tunisia and Libya on the east and Morocco on the west, borders the Mediterranean Sea. Its coastline has a total length of 1200 Km.

More than 85% of the country is covered by the Sahara desert. The remaining area can be divided into three distinct topographical and climate regions: at the coast, the Tell region including the Tell Atlas, close to the Sahara desert the Saharan Atlas, and the 'Hauts Plateaux' or High Plateau, a highland region of level terrain with huge, shallow wetlands between these two parallel mountain ranges. The Habibas Islands (marine nature reserves), which consists of two rocky islands lying in the extreme northwest of the Algerian coastline (Oran region), also belong to Algeria.

Algeria's coastline and offshore islands support breeding seabird populations. Algeria's wetlands, in particular those that are found along the coast and on the plateau south of Constantine, are of high importance for migratory and resident water birds including three globally threatened species, the marbled teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), the ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*) and the white-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*). The coastal lagoons around El Kala (close to the Tunisian border) are considered to be the most important site for breeding water birds in eastern Algeria and one of the most important in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean monk seal has disappeared from most of its geographic area, but a few animals still may inhabit Algerian waters.

Although Algeria is one of the major oil and gas producing countries of Africa it is still considered to be relatively under-explored. The main areas of exploration for oil and gas are in the east, on the border of Tunisia and Libya and the central area where large gas discoveries have been made. Algeria uses seven coastal terminals for the export of crude oil, refined products, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas liquids (NGL). The facilities are located at Arzew (Algeria's largest crude oil export port), Skikda (Algeria's second largest crude oil export port), Algiers, Annaba, Oran, Bejaia, and La Skhirra in Tunisia. The risk of oil spills is likely to increase due to the expansion of some of the main terminals (7th Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points).

## Regional Seas

Mediterranean Sea

## Past experience

Algeria has experienced some minor spills such as Juan Antonio Lavallega (1980) and Oued Gueterini (1986). During 2003 and 2004 several accidents occurred in Algerian ports and terminals and although not major in terms of pollution, some of these resulted in loss of human life. Oiled wildlife was not reported.

## Response: the role of the authorities

Since 1994, a National contingency plan has been in place.

A National Committee named Telbahr, created in 2001 and in which different Ministries are represented, is the authority responsible for oil spill response. Emergency Plans have been set up for the national, regional (3 maritime districts: Alger, Oran, Jijel) and local (14 coastal provinces) levels, coordinated respectively by the Ministry of Land Management and Environment, the Commander of the marine district, and by the governor of each coastal province.

The response to oiled wildlife is likely to fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Land Management and Environment (MATE).

## Oiled wildlife response

### Formal guidelines?

As yet, no oiled wildlife response plan is in place.

### Response objectives and strategy

No reference.

## Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

In case of an oiled wildlife incident, the Ministry of Land Management and Environment (MATE) will probably allow the rehabilitation of oiled wildlife.

## Impact assessment

No reference.

## Notification and early response

Any notification of oiled wildlife is channelled to the National Service of Coast Guard, which in turn can be expected to notify the Ministry of Land Management and Environment (MATE).

## **Wildlife responders**

No wildlife rehabilitation centre exists in Algeria and oiled wildlife response expertise is not available nationally.

There are a few local organisations that may be important sources of information and local knowledge in case of a future oiled wildlife incident, including the Algerian Ecological Movement, the Association for Research on the Climate and the Environment and the National Association for the Protection of the Environment and Fight Against Pollution (Anpep).

Other sources of information are Marine Science Faculties and Research Institutes that are involved in coastal, environmental and oil pollution research. These include the Institute of Marine Science and Coastal Management (ISMAL), the Section on Marine Ecotoxicology of the Laboratory of Biology and Marine Pollution (Department of Biology, Science Faculty of the University of Oran), the Department of Sciences of the Sea (Science Faculty, University of Annaba) and the Research Laboratory on Meadows (University of Annaba).

At the regional level, some organisations may be able to provide useful information and contacts, such as the Regional Activity Centre for Special Protected Areas (RAC/SPA), the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET), the Mediterranean information office for environment, culture and sustainable development (MIO-ECSD) and the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED).

## **Cooperation between stakeholders**

n.a.

## **Permanent facilities**

Algeria does not have permanent oiled wildlife response facilities.

## **Current processes**

n.a.

## **Documentation and references**

General references

ITOPF Country Profile

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