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Introduction
The Republic of Georgia is located in the Caucasus region, bordering the Russian Federation to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Armenia to the south, Turkey to the southwest, and the Black Sea to the west. Much of coastal Georgia is contained within two autonomous regions: Abkhazia on the northwest coast and Adjara on the southeast coast. The country's 310 km coastline consists of wetlands, rocky shores, steep cliffs, and sandy beaches. The climate along the coast is humid and subtropical, with the southeast being driest.

Two Ramsar sites in Georgia have potential to be impacted by oil spills in the Black Sea. The first is the Wetlands of Central Kolkheti within the Kolkheti National Park, consisting of a coastal alluvial plain, rivers with extensive peat wetlands and lakes. This site hosts wintering waterbirds and nesting birds of prey. The second is the Ispani Mire in Adjara, which features peat bogs, swamps, fens and forested peatland on a coastal alluvial plain that hosts a variety of migratory waterbirds.

In addition, there is an inland pipeline between Baku, Azerbaijan and Tbilisi, Georgia which continues on to Ceyhan in Turkey. This Baku-Supsa pipeline represents a potential risk to inland wildlife species.

At Risk Wildlife
In this section, some individual wildlife species are mentioned followed by a letter in parentheses. These are species included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species within the top three categories of risk - Vulnerable to extinction (V), Endangered (E) or Critically Endangered (CR).

Avian species – the coastal wetlands of Georgia are important stopping points for many migrating waterbirds and raptors, which concentrate in the Kolkheti wetlands, the Chorokhi Delta and on the Batumi coast. Sociable lapwing (CR), white-headed duck (E), lesser white-fronted goose (V), Velvet scoter (V), common pochard (V), horned grebe (V), and Yelkouan shearwater (V) are species of concern.
In addition to the Batumi Flyway and Chorokhi Delta, the Achkva, Dagva, and Kvirike areas host large numbers of birds of prey during migration, including greater spotted eagle (V) and steppe eagle (E) both of which may prey on coastal species.

Marine mammals – there are three dolphin species in the waters of Georgia, the Black Sea subspecies of bottlenose dolphin (E), Black Sea subspecies of harbour porpoise (E) and common dolphin. All tend to inhabit coastal regions. Eurasian otters, which often feed in coastal waters, may also be at risk. The jungle cat, although not common, may be found in wetlands with dense cover. Other land mammals may be impacted should a pipeline spill occur.

Marine reptiles – No marine reptiles are found in the Black Sea. Along the pipeline, reptiles such as frogs may be impacted.

Regional Seas
Black Sea

Past experience
No major spills affecting wildlife have been reported in Georgian waters.

Response: the role of the authorities
The competent national authority for oil pollution and response to oil spills is the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development's Maritime Transport Administration. Within the Maritime Transport Administration, the Marine Rescue Coordination Centre-Oil Pollution Response Centre (MRCC-OPRC) oversees response.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MoENRP) acts as a supporting governmental authority for the implementation of the National Contingency Plan (NCP), providing technical expertise and advice on environmental matters, environmentally sensitive areas and assessment of marine pollution.

The MoENRP and the Directorate for Environmental and Natural Resources of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara act as Environmental Experts on the National Oil Spill Support Team when the NCP is activated. This support team is responsible for oiled wildlife issues. There is no similar cooperative process for the Abkhazian Autonomous Region, which is located near the Supsa Oil Terminal.

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Oiled wildlife response
Formal guidelines?
There is a general reference made to oiled wildlife in the NCP but there are no formal guidelines for an oiled wildlife response in Georgia. There is also a reference to volunteer management in the Health and Safety Annex of the NCP, as well as to the need for trained specialists in oiled wildlife response.

At least one oil company has an Oiled Wildlife Response Plan for its operations in Georgia. Whether they would be able to offer assistance to other companies in a spill situation is not clear.

As of 2005 a special licence is required for international experts to handle birds in Georgia. This licence may be obtained from the Ministry of the Interior with assistance from MoENRP.

Response objectives and strategy
The reference in the NCP does not give clear response objectives or strategy.

Euthanasia or rehabilitation?
Given the reference to wildlife in the NCP, it is likely that rehabilitation would be allowed, however, there are no experienced wildlife rehabilitators in Georgia, thus outside assistance would be needed to implement a response. Euthanasia would likely be allowed on welfare grounds.

Impact assessment
Ilia State University has been involved in both Black Sea biodiversity evaluation and marine mammal monitoring, thus would likely be involved in impact assessment under the direction of the MoENRP. It is possible that the Society for Nature Conservation (SABUKO), a Birdlife International partner, might be involved as well.

Notification and early response
The National Oil Spill Support Team would likely be notified in the event wildlife is impacted by a spill but there are no details regarding this in the NCP.

Wildlife responders
There are no established wildlife rescue and rehabilitation individuals or organisations in Georgia. SABUKO and the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network, which works largely on sustainable development issues, might be able to provide information and support.

Cooperation between stakeholders
There is cooperation between the government, the oil industry and the ports. SABUKO works with several government departments on conservation projects.

Georgia is a signatory to the Odessa Declaration (Bucharest Convention) for the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, the Protocol on Cooperation in Combatting Pollution of the Black Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances and the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea.

Permanent facilities
There are no permanent facilities for wildlife rehabilitation in Georgia.

Current processes
The Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (OSPRI) is working with Bucharest Convention (Black Sea) members on improving oil spill response preparedness and cooperation.

Documentation and references
General references
Georgia ITOPF Country Profile (2006)
Georgia Ramsar Convention Profile
Birdlife International Georgia Country Profile
OSPRI Annual Report (2016)

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