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Introduction
The State of Kuwait is located in the northern Persian Gulf, bordered in the north and west by Iraq, in the south by Saudi Arabia, and in the east by the Gulf. The country's coastline, including its nine islands, is approximately 400km long and consists of primarily sandy beaches to the north with extensive mudflats near and south of Kuwait City. The offshore islands are made up of coral reefs, mudflats, salt marshes and dunes which provide habitat for numerous marine species.
The salt marshes and small lagoons of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Reserve on Bubbiyan Island, a Ramsar site, are important habitat for breeding and migratory birds and the waters are a major nursery for many fish species. The Al-Doha Nature Reserve on Kuwait Bay consists of sandy beaches, tidal mudflats and a small reed bed which are utilised by migratory and wintering birds.

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 – on migration and during winter, numerous species of wading birds, including large numbers of overwintering flamingos, forage and roost on the mudflats and in the reed beds of Kuwait and Sulaibikhat Bays, which includes the Ad-Doha Nature Reserve. Slender-billed gulls, spoonbills, various species of heron, and the largest known colony of crab plovers breed on Bubbiyan Island. There have also been recent reports of nesting Dalmatian pelican on the island. 5000 to 6000 terns nest on Khubbar, Umm Al-Maradim, and Qaruh Islands from May to July. Species of special concern include the great knot (E), the Egyptian vulture (E) which may feed on contaminated carcasses, common pochard (V), Socotra cormorant (V), long-tailed duck (V) and marbled duck (V). Basra reed warbler (E) winters in coastal reed beds.

Marine mammals – there are three nearshore species of concern recorded in Kuwait– the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (V) (found near Bubbiyan Island, which has been seen less frequently in recent years), the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins found near Khubbar Island, and Indo-Pacific finless porpoise (V) found in coastal waters. Common dolphins are found offshore, and orca have recently been reported in the region.

Marine reptiles – Hawksbill turtles (CR) nest on the islands of Qaruh and Umm Al-Maradim from March to July. Green turtles (E) are seen in the area around Qaruh and Umm Al-Maradim but only nest on Qaruh. Undeveloped beaches northwest and south of Ras Az-Zoor once hosted nesting hawksbills, but there has recently been industrial development in the area. Loggerhead turtles (V) are rare visitors to the region. Ten species of sea snake have been recorded in Kuwait waters.

Regional Seas
Persian Gulf (ROPME Sea Area) within the Arabian Sea.

Past experience
During the 1991 Gulf War, over 3,000 birds died, mostly grebes and cormorants. Of these, the Socotra cormorant suffered an estimated 22-50% mortality level and has yet to recover to pre-spill population levels. There were reports of a number of oiled, dead turtles and at least 93 dead marine mammals (dugongs and dolphins), but some of these animals were found south of the spill zone, and thus there may have been other causes for some of the mortalities. Since then there have been a number of loading operations spills at oil terminals, including two spills reported in 2017 but no reports of oiled wildlife have been verified.

Response: the role of the authorities
The Environment Public Authority (EPA) is the Competent National Authority for oil spill response, overseeing the implementation of the Kuwait National Contingency Plan. The Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources and the Kuwait Oil Company would be involved in response efforts.

The Marine Emergencies Mutual Aide Centre (MEMAC) of the Regional Organisation for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) could be called for assistance in large incidents. Smaller incidents may be managed by the relevant industry facility or port, with shoreline clean-up the responsibility of the Kuwait Municipality.

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Oiled wildlife response

Formal guidelines?

There are no formal guidelines in place for marine wildlife response, however the EPA would have oversight should any oiled wildlife response be initiated.

Response objectives and strategy

N/A

Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

During the 1991 Gulf War, oiled wildlife response was permitted, with a variety of international organisations brought in to oversee the rescue and rehabilitation process.

Impact assessment

The EPA, along with collaborating agencies and organisations, is working to establish a Comprehensive Database for the Marine Environment of Kuwait and would oversee any impact assessment.

Notification and early response

There is no process in place for notification of, and early response to, oiled marine wildlife.

Wildlife responders

There are no experienced oiled wildlife responders or other wildlife rehabilitators in Kuwait. The Kuwait Dive Team (KDT), an all-volunteer organisation which has worked on multiple marine environment improvements including clearing areas of marine debris, may be called on to assist in some aspects of wildlife response. The Scientific Center of Kuwait has a small aquarium. Whether staff and facilities there would be able to assist in a response is not clear.
A project funded by the oil industry from 2008-2012 involved rescuing entangled or entrapped sea turtles, but there is no mention of rehabilitation of turtles in the project documents.
Kuwait University and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) might be involved in response activity including impact assessment.

Cooperation between stakeholders

There are few cooperative wildlife activities underway in Kuwait at this time.
Kuwait is a signatory to the Kuwait Convention which is administered by the (ROPME). ROPME holds MoUs with the Programme for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) and with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Permanent facilities

There are no permanent facilities for wildlife rehabilitation in Kuwait.

Current processes

There are no processes in place at this time to develop formal guidelines nor expertise in oiled wildlife response.

Documentation and references

General references
ITOPF Country Profile
Birdlife International Country Profile
Owfi et al. 2015. Species diversity and distribution pattern of marine mammals of the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman-Iranian Waters
Poonian, C. 2003. The effects of the 1991 Gulf War on the marine and coastal environment of the Arabian Gulf: Impact, recovery and future prospects
General references

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