

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, located on the West African coast, is bordered to the south by the Atlantic Ocean, on the West by Benin, on the north by Niger, on the northeast by Chad, and on the east by Cameroon. The country's 853 km of coastline consists of four distinct geomorphic units - the Barrier Lagoon Complex, the Mud Coast, the Arcuate Niger Delta and the Strand Coast.

Within the Niger Delta region is one of the world's largest mangrove forests. The extent of the vegetated tidal flats inland in this region can vary by 30 to 50 km, with the dry season allowing for greater incursion of saltwater and the rainy season flushing it back beyond the barrier beaches. Apoi Creek Forest is a Ramsar site in the Niger Delta with both mangrove and freshwater swamps, hosting a variety of wildlife species.

The rainy season lasts from March/April until October/November with rainfall along the coast averaging between 2,400 and 3,200mm a year. At this time access and travel may be restricted.

In addition to offshore oil production, three refineries and a number of pipelines are located within the Niger Delta, which may require inland response.

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 – in Nigeria, waterbirds which include herons, fish eagles, darters, and waterfowl, are found in small numbers along the entire coast, but few areas are protected and preferred roosts and nesting areas are not well known.

Species of special concern include Cape Gannet (E), grey parrot (E) which roosts in mangroves, marbled teal (V), common pochard (V), black-crowned crane (V), Damara tern (V), and hooded vulture(V) which may forage along the coast.

Marine mammals – while a variety of marine mammals inhabit Nigeria's waters, most occur offshore. Species of concern are the Atlantic humpback dolphin (CR) which inhabits nearshore areas, and the African manatee (V), which is found along the coast, as well as in the Niger Delta and some inland waterways.

Note: Some coastal mammal species may also be at risk, particularly when oil impacts mangroves and lagoons where green and patas monkeys, common (V) and pygmy (E) hippo, civet, mongoose, genet and river otter may forage. Niger Delta red colobus (CR) may be found in the marshes of Apoi Creek, a Ramsar site.

Marine Reptiles – five species of sea turtle : green (E), leatherback (V), olive ridley (V), loggerhead (V) and hawksbill (CR) are found in Nigerian waters. Of these, all but the loggerhead nest on Nigeria's beaches. Some freshwater reptiles may be impacted by inland spills.

Regional Seas

Atlantic Ocean – Gulf of Guinea.

Past experience

More than 4000 incidents have been recorded in the Niger Delta, some as a result of political unrest. Major spills in the coastal zone include GOCON's Escarvos spill (1978), the blowout at the Funiwa 5 Offshore station (1980), the Abudu pipeline spill (1982), the Jesse Pipeline incident (1998) and the Idoho spill (1998).

No information is available on the impacts of these spills on wildlife.

Response: the role of the authorities

The Federal Ministry of Environment's National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) is the competent national authority for oil spill response under the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) which was validated in 2013. The Nigerian Ports Authority and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) respond to offshore and port related incidents.

The Ministry of Defence would also be involved in response and clean-up efforts, as would the National Emergency Management Agency.

The Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMAR) is responsible for oil spill trajectory modelling, as well as providing other Technical/Scientific Support Services to NOSDRA.

Oiled wildlife response

Formal guidelines?

As of 2015 an oiled wildlife response plan was under development, with plans to include information on good practices, and use of experts and volunteers. No further information is available as of 2018.

Response objectives and strategy

N/A

Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation would likely be allowed, with euthanasia likely permitted based on best practice standards for animal health and welfare.

Impact assessment

The Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMAR) would be the lead agency for impact assessment and post-spill monitoring of environmental recovery. The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), which works closely with the Ministry of Environment and NIOMAR, would also be involved in restoring and monitoring oil impacted sites. The A.P Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) might be involved in avian assessment.

Notification and early response

There is no system in place for notification of, and response to, oiled wildlife at this time.

Wildlife responders

There are no experienced oiled wildlife responders in Nigeria. There is minimal wildlife rehabilitation (see Permanent Facilities below), however there are projects in place for habitat and species conservation, including an NCF marine programme presently under development. NIOMAR is involved in ongoing work to protect and repatriate sea turtles and manage their nesting beaches.

The political climate may impact ability to respond to wildlife, particularly in the Niger Delta.

Cooperation between stakeholders

The Ministry of Environment holds an MoU with the NCF, which also works with government agencies, NIOMAR, APLORI, and Pandrillus on various environmental projects.

Nigeria has ratified the Abidjan Convention Protocol on Oil Pollution, the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan, and Bamako Convention (banning import and controlling transboundary movement and management of hazardous wastes in Africa).

Permanent facilities

There are no permanent facilities for rehabilitation of oiled wildlife. There are limited facilities for wildlife rehabilitation, most notably Drill Ranch in the Cross River region which specialises in primate rehabilitation, but none specialising in birds or aquatic animals.

Current processes

An oiled wildlife response plan associated with the NOSCP is under development.

Nigeria held a national workshop on oil spill modelling in 2016 and a bilateral oil spill response exercise with Cameroon was held in 2015 under the Global Initiative-West, Central and Southern Africa (GI-WACAF) project.

Documentation and references

General references

General references

ITOPF Country Profile

GI-WACAF Country Profile

National Oil Spill Contingency Plan for Nigeria (2010 version)

Birdlife International Country Profile

The Sea Turtles of Africa 2017. State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) Volume 12

National Report: Sea Turtles in Nigeria. Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMR)

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