# Case study: Oiled wildlife response training in Russia

## Project overview

To improve awareness of the importance of oiled wildlife response in the Baltic Region and to work with the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) to improve oiled wildlife response preparedness and integrate oiled wildlife response into the overall pollution response plans of its Contracting Parties.
To provide an oiled wildlife preparedness assessment as well as oiled wildlife response and basic care training in Arctic Russia.

## Background

Russia is host to fourteen of the world's 200 globally significant biodiversity regions, many of which are in and around the Arctic. In 2015, recognising the need to protect that biodiversity, four members of the Russian Federation's oil and gas industry—Rosneft, Gazprom Group, LUKOIL and NOVATEK—developed corporate programmes for biodiversity conservation in the Arctic.

These programmes were created as part of *Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into Russia's energy sector policies and operations*, a multi-year project supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Russia, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation. The project ran from 2012 to 2017, during which time the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment also established measures for oiled wildlife loss prevention.

## Project implementation

Sea Alarm, invited by UNDP Russia to assist in this project, worked with LUKOIL on developing and improving the key elements of oiled wildlife preparedness and response for their facilities and personnel.

During the first part of the project, Sea Alarm assessed LUKOIL's Arctic-based facility near Naryan Mar and made recommendations for improvements to the existing oil spill response plans which would better incorporate oil-impacted wildlife into the overall response. With some additional guidance from Sea Alarm, LUKOIL can expand the use of these guidelines to other facilities, within the Arctic and in other areas of the country, modifying them as needed to suit each facility and type of wildlife found nearby.

The second part of the project consisted of a week-long training session on oiled wildlife response, also led by Sea Alarm. LUKOIL, along with representatives of relevant government agencies, the IUCN, WWF Russia, the Nenets State Nature Reserve, the Darwin Nature Biosphere Reserve, and the Russian Arctic National Park attended classroom sessions, which included three days of desktop exercises simulating an oil spill situation with impacted wildlife. Sea Alarm staff gave lectures covering basic information on prevention measures to keep wildlife from becoming oiled in the early stages of a spill and present best practice rescue and initial bird care procedures.

The last two days of training were supported by partners from the EUROWA project (Wildlife Rescue Centre Ostend and ProBird), who led two days of hands-on training at a local lake using capture, transport and care equipment as well as practicing setting up a simple command centre. Personnel from LUKOIL, the Astrakhan State Wildlife Reserve, and a local volunteer organisation, Friends of Astrakhan Reserve, attended these sessions.

## Results

During the assessment process Sea Alarm was able to give LUKOIL personnel deeper insight into the complexity of responding to oiled wildlife and to use that knowledge to improve their response planning and preparedness to reflect this knowledge.

*Figure 1 EUROWA Partners Claude Velter (WRC Ostend) and Sascha Regmann (ProBird) provide basic oiled wildlife response training*


*Figure 2 Attendees of the UNDP training event*

### *Advocacy*

During the assessment process Sea Alarm was able to give LUKOIL personnel deeper insight into the complexity of responding to oiled wildlife and to use that knowledge to improve their response planning and preparedness to reflect this knowledge.

### *Capacity building*

LUKOIL became the first company within the Russian oil and gas industry to hold oiled wildlife response and basic care training. Company directors and managers took part in the courses, which will ensure a better understanding of what an integrated oiled wildlife response requires, in order to help protect local biodiversity.

### *Wildlife response preparedness*

The assessment phase of the project resulted in a series of detailed recommendations on introducing a component on the prevention of wildlife mortality into company practices and oil spill preparedness frameworks. Not only does this provide guidance to LUKOIL on developing their own wildlife preparedness, but the recommendations also envisaged a wider discussion with other industry, government and NGO stakeholders to expand the results of the project and promote the importance of oiled wildlife response throughout the Russian Federation.

### *Training and exercises*

Attendees were trained in methods of preventing oil impacts and response to impacted wildlife, including practical sessions which gave a real sense of the operational and logistical challenges involved. Use of the 'roboduck' device to simulate search and collection of live provided a 'birds eye view' of the capture and handling process.

*Facilitating multi-stakeholder activities*

Personnel from LUKOIL, government agencies and international/regional/local organisations worked together during the training sessions, strengthening ties between the groups which will aid in smoother interactions should an oil spill impacting wildlife occur.

**Links**

IUCN Russian Arctic Fact Sheet
UNDP Mainstreaming Arctic conservation page
GEF
EUROWA