Introduction
Spain borders the Cantabrian Sea (Bay of Biscay) to the north, the Mediterranean Sea and the Balearic Sea to the southeast, the Alboran Sea to the south, and Portugal and the North Atlantic Ocean to the west. The Strait of Gibraltar separates Spain and the rest of Europe from Morocco (north Africa). Also included in the Spanish territory are two autonomous archipelagos (the Canary Islands, situated in the Atlantic Ocean, 100 kms off the northwest coast of Morocco, and the Balear Islands situated in the Mediterranean Sea) and several exclaves on and off the coast of Morocco, including Ceuta, Melilla, Islas Chafarinas, Peñón de Alhucemas and Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera. The Spanish Mediterranean coast is 1.660 km long; the Atlantic coast 710 km.

High densities of different seabird species occur year-round. Up to 27 species of cetaceans have been observed in Spanish waters, although not all of them are common. The Spanish coast hosts as well four sea turtle species.

The Mediterranean is a major world shipping route linking the Atlantic Ocean with the Suez Canal. The Strait of Gibraltar is crossed by a large numbers of vessels including vessels carrying oil and other hazardous cargos. The Strait of Gibraltar is part of an important bird migration route between northern Europe and Africa, and many species of birds can be found at different times of the year. The Alboran Sea, a transition zone between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, is an essential habitat for the largest population of bottlenose dolphins in the Western Mediterranean, the last population of harbour porpoises in the Mediterranean, and one of the most important feeding grounds for loggerhead turtles in Europe. In the Atlantic, waters around Galicia have already been hit by major oil spills. Maritime transport in European Atlantic waters has been predicted to continue increasing.

Regional Seas
Northern Atlantic Ocean
Mediterranean Sea

Past experience
Spain has experienced large sized spills which include the Urquiola (1976), the Neretva (1992), the Aegean Sea (1992), the Prestige (November 2002), Mystery spill (Galicia, 2004) Don Pedro (2007) and Nava Serra (2007).

In the aftermath of the Prestige 21,500 birds were found oiled, of which more than 3200 were collected alive on Galician beaches. The species most affected (80%) were razorbill (Alca torda), guillemot (Uria aalgaee) and Atlantic puffin (Fratercula arctica). During the first nine months in the aftermath of the incident, 12,211 birds were collected, 2469 were alive and 9472 were dead. The main wildlife rescue centre (O Campiño) received in total 1786 oiled birds, of which 275 were released back into the wild. In addition, 26 birds were released from the Oleiros wildlife rescue centre. This incident quickly overwhelmed local resources and was managed with the help of a number of international organisations. 10 first aid centres along the Galician coast were established, two forward holding centre (Santa Cruz de Oleiros, in A Coruña and O Veral in Lugo) and a large temporary facility with a capacity of 1500 birds approximately was built under supervision of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) Emergency Response Team in O Campiño. Oiled wildlife impact assessment was carried out by SEO Birdlife, assisted by the University of A Coruña and scientists from the Royal NIOZ (NL) and the University of Aberdeen/SOTEAG (UK). The Prestige oil spill not only had an enormous impact on Galicia and the country. It also impacted the European Community, which after the Prestige went to adopt new maritime regulations and policies for the prevention of (oil) accidents at sea.

In 2004, A Mystery spill in Pontevedra, Galicia, in between A Lanzada y Corrubedo
The main species affected were northern gannet (Sula bassana), guillemot (Uria aalgaee), razorbill (Alca torda) and Atlantic puffin (Fratercula arctica). 492 birds were collected and brought to a wildlife rescue centre to rehabilitate them.
Response: the role of the authorities

A National Contingency Plan for Oil Pollution has been in place since February 2001 and is currently under review. Each of the autonomous communities is developing a regional contingency plan, i.e. CAMCAT in Catalonia, PRAMCOVA in Valencia, PECLA in Andalucía, PLACAMPA in Asturias, PECAMAR in Canary Islands, CECOP in Galicia, PTCCMA in Ceuta.

The competent national authority for oil spill planning and response is the Sub directorate General for Maritime Safety and Pollution Control (Directorate General of the Merchant Navy - DGMM, Ministry of Public Works). The Spanish Marine Rescue and Safety Agency (SASEMAR) acts as the national notification point. SASEMAR, which is also responsible for maritime rescue and maritime traffic control, operates from the National Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Madrid and has 20 Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres along the Spanish coast but can also operate from important national ports.

The Centre for the Prevention and Combat of Maritime and Coastal Pollution (CEPRECO) of the Ministry of Presidency was created in 2004, with the aim of coordinating an oil spill response and establishing operational links between the national government and the competent regional authorities. However, since 2008, CEPRECO does not exist.

Nature protection, which includes an oiled wildlife response, has been delegated to the Regional Governments, which are also responsible for shoreline cleanup. Planning and coordination of these activities will be carried out at a sub-regional (provincial) level, by the provincial departments of the Regional Government under supervision of the Regional Government. The Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Environment's regional governments will assume responsibility for responding to oiled wildlife incident.

Ten of the Spanish autonomous communities are coastal situated, including, per regional sea:

Mediterranean Sea:
- Catalonia
- Valencia
- Murcia
- Andalucía
- Balear islands

Atlantic Ocean:
- Galicia
- Asturias
- Cantabria
- Basque Country
- Canary Islands

Oiled wildlife response

Formal guidelines?
The regions are responsible for developing response plans for wildlife. An oiled wildlife response plan does not exist in any of the coastal autonomous communities, with two exceptions. Since November 2005, the Community of the Canary Islands has included an oiled wildlife section in the regional contingency plan. The section, which distinguishes between seabirds, sea turtles, cetaceans and seals, provides guidance on how to collect, clean and rehabilitate oiled wildlife. The regional Government of Galicia (Xunta de Galicia, sub department of Natural Parks and Biodiversity, Directorate General of Nature Conservation; Biodiversity Conservation Service) has ordered the development of an oiled birds response plan which is still at a stage of a first outline.

Response objectives and strategy

Like in Canary Islands and Galicia, the other eight coastal Regional Communities can be expected to mount an oiled wildlife response, albeit pre-spill defined plans are not available. At the moment there is not a common
strategy on how Spanish and international resources (experts, equipment) could be called on in the form of an integrated, tiered response.

**Euthanasia or rehabilitation?**
Past incidents have demonstrated that Regional Authorities would allow NGOs and coastal rehabilitation centres to respond and undertake an attempt to rehabilitate oiled wildlife.

**Impact assessment**
Spain gained experience during the Prestige oil spill in 2002 where an oiled wildlife impact assessment was carried out. In the aftermath of that incident, SEO Birdlife has carried out an extensive effort to systematically collect and count oiled casualties on a day to day basis, and published a report. It can be expected that SEO Birdlife will take a similar role in a future Spanish incident.

A list and description of Important Areas for the Conservation of Seabirds in Spain is available, which was published by SEO (Spanish Ornithological Society)/BirdLife in 2008.

**Notification and early response**
Any notification of oiled wildlife will channeled to SASEMAR, which in turn can be expected to notify the different key players including regional authorities and wildlife responders.

**Wildlife responders**
There are many coastal wildlife rehabilitation centres in Spain, but their experience with oiled wildlife is only limited. A number of individuals (veterinarians and volunteers) have been involved in the Prestige wildlife response, and were trained by international experts. Although a number of them would be available in a future incident, as a group they will not have the kind of routine and leadership needed to set up, coordinate a large scale response and rehabilitate large number of animals.

**Birds**
There are several State dependent bird rehabilitation centers including centres in Torreferrussa (Barcelona), Girona (north Catalonia), Delta de l’Ebre (south Catalonia), La Alberca (Murcia), El Saler (Valencia), Menorca/Mallorca/Eivissa (Balear Islands), Cadiz/Malaga/Granada/Almeria (Andalucia), A Coruña/Pontevedra (Galicia), Luarca/Llanes (Asturias), Santander (Cantabria), San Sebastian/Gorliz (Basque country), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria/Sta. Cruz de Tenerife (Canary Islands) and Ceuta. Submon, a Catalan NGO established in 2008, would also deal with birds and other animals in the aftermath of an oiled wildlife incident.

**Marine mammals and sea turtles**
With regards to marine mammals and sea turtles, there are State dependent rehabilitation centers including centres in La Alberca (Murcia), El Saler (Valencia), Malaga (Andalucia), Santander (Cantabria) and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Canary Islands). In case of cetacean stranding, the Marine Zoology Unit of Valencia University with its Mediterranean Database of Cetacean Strandings is the most appropriate institution for rescue and rehabilitation.

Private enterprises are also found in Premia de Mar (Barcelona), Palafolls (Girona), Mallorca (Balear Islands), Pontevedra (Galicia), Luarca (Asturias) that aim to rehabilitate marine fauna
The S3 group, which consists of private enterprises with an only secondary aim of wildlife rehabilitation, includes a centre (Aquarium) in Valencia.

Other non-coastal rehabilitation centres may play some role in the event of a future oiled wildlife incident. A number of national and local NGOs, working groups and institutes may get involved in an oiled wildlife response (as was seen in the aftermath of the Prestige incident) such as the Iberian Seabird Group of the Galician Society of Ornithology (SGO), the Spanish Society of Ornithology (SEO), WWF-Adena, Amigos de la Tierra, Arce, the Society for the study and conservation of marine fauna Euskadi (AMBAR), the Rehabilitation Group of Endemic Wildlife and Their Habitat (GREFA), as well as Marine Research Institutes and Marine Faculties (e.g. the University A Coruña, Animal Pathology Department at the Veterinary Faculty of University Autonomous of Barcelona).

**Cooperation between stakeholders**
CONCER Forum is an Iberian platform of coastal rehabilitation centres which allows veterinarians,
rehabilitators and other wildlife responders from Spain and Portugal to exchange opinions and to cooperate on specific and actual issues.

**Permanent facilities**
The main permanent facilities for oiled birds in Spain are located in Barcelona (WRC Torreferrusa), Girona (WRC Natural Park Aiguamolls de l'Empordà), Menorca (GOB), Mallorca (COFIB and the Sanitary Centre for the Animal Protection de Son Reus), Eivissa (Sa Coma), Cadiz (CREAS Dunas de San Antón), Granada (CREAS El Blanqueo), Malaga (CREAS Pecho Venus), Almería (CREA Las Almohallas), A Coruña (WRC de Santa Cruz), Pontevedra (WRC de Cotorredondo), Santander (Maritime Museum), Valencia (WRC "La Granja" de El Saler), La Alberca, Murcia (WRC "El Valle"), Asturias (WRC de Guipúzcoa, Donostia, San Sebastián), Gorliz, Basque Country (WRC de Vizcaya), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (WRC de Tafira), Sta. Cruz de Tenerife (WRC "La Tahonilla") and Ceuta (WRC Ceuta).

Permanent rehabilitation centres for marine mammals and sea turtles are located in La Alberca, Murcia (WRC "El Valle"), Valencia (WRC "La Granja" de El Saler), Málaga (CREMA-Centre of Rehabilitation of Endangered Marine Species), Santander (Maritime Museum), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (WRC de Tafira), Premià de Mar, Barcelona (CRAM-Centre of Rehabilitation of marine mammals), Palafolls (Marineland), Mallorca (Marineland Palmitos), Málaga (CREMA), Pontevedra (CEMMA (Coordinator for the study of Marine mammals), Luarca, Asturias (CEPESMA (Coordinator for the study and the Protection of Marine Species) and Valencia ("Oceanografic", Aquarium).

In Andalucía, two new coastal rehabilitation centres for marine mammals are being built in Algeciras (Cadiz) and Almería. Another centre dealing with seabirds and marine mammals is under construction in Huelva. In Galicia, a new rescue centre is planned to be built.

**Current processes**
A national workshop on Oiled Wildlife Response and Preparedness was held in November 2007 in A Coruña. The workshop, organised by Sea Alarm and Fundacion Arao with the assistance of Cepreco, the Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Environment and DG Nature Conservation Xunta of Galicia, was attended by representative of Civil Protection and Ministry of Environment from each of the coastal regions of Spain.

**Documentation and references**
General references
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