

## Updates

Date	Section	Change
October 2023	2.10	Entire Wildlife Response chapter updated by France & EUROWA

## 2.10 WILDLIFE RESPONSE

### 2.10.1 Introduction

This chapter provides operating guidelines which could be considered by those Contracting Parties which under given circumstances of an oil spill incident would seek the assistance of wildlife response experts, expert groups or special equipment from abroad, from other Contracting Parties. In most countries the expertise lies with Non Governmental Organisations and therefore due consideration should be given to the optimal integration of these foreign resources into the national response organisation. The EUROWA initiative provides a useful structure by which this can be facilitated.

Although this chapter is focusing on wildlife response in the aftermath of an oil spill, the same principles would apply if a wildlife problem was caused by e.g. HNS or an algal bloom.

Part 1 of this chapter provides a set of guidelines for the development of national oiled wildlife response plans that would support the international mobilisation of expertise from abroad.

Part 2 highlights the lines in respectively Pollinf and PolFAC that can be used for an international alert or request for oiled wildlife response.

Part 3 provides a set of guidelines and principles that will facilitate the integration of foreign wildlife response experts or teams in a national response organisation.

Some marine animals are extremely sensitive to oiling. This is because these animals use the water surface (where oil floats) to rest, dive through from above to feed, or to break through from beneath to breathe. The effects of oiling may be lethal and many animals affected by the oil will die at sea. However, a certain number of oiled animals (dead or alive) may arrive at the coast, depending on prevailing current and wind conditions. Depending on the circumstances this could range from only a few animals to hundreds or thousands if the oil was released near, or in the middle of an important habitat and season. So many animals arriving ashore may cause a serious challenge to the affected country and this needs special consideration as part of the oil spill response activities: it needs an integrated oiled wildlife response. It is therefore recommended to include oiled wildlife response within the local or national oil spill contingency plan.

In some countries, euthanasia, using various techniques, is the preferred response option. In many others, the aim is to try to rescue and rehabilitate at least part of the animals and euthanise others.

An oiled wildlife response includes any activity that can be undertaken to deal with wild animals that are/may be affected by oil following a marine oil spill:

- Pro-active measures to minimise the impact on wildlife (removing the oil before it reaches sensitive areas, protecting these areas by keeping the oil out, or taking animals, nests or eggs away from the threatened areas, by disturbing through hazing or capturing/collecting them).
- Measures to mitigate the effects of oil on animals (attempt capture, cleaning and rehabilitation in specialised facilities, or alternatively end suffering by euthanasia). Sometimes, circumstances and weather conditions do not allow active mitigation, or health and safety considerations (which come first at all times) can even prevent activities being undertaken at all. Also, personal initiatives by members of the public to attempt to rescue affected animals may affect interventions.

Amongst the greatest challenges of wildlife response is the question of how many animals will become affected, at what scale resources (manpower, experts, equipment, etc.) will have to be mobilised, and how to deal with public/media expectations. Especially in the first days after the spill, important decisions have to be made and it will take time before a wildlife response can become operational. If in those days animals already start coming ashore, they need to be taken care of by nearby responders. These responders could include volunteers, if well- coordinated and supervised.

## 2.10.2 Part 1: Recommended guidelines for national oiled wildlife response planning

It is recommended that the Contracting States apply these guidelines to develop a wildlife response plan that is integrated into the relevant oil pollution contingency plans, and exchange the details about its contents with other Contracting Parties.

### 2.10.2.1 Guidelines on wildlife response planning

The Guidelines below reflect the recommendations from the IPIECA Good Practice Guide on Oiled Wildlife Preparedness (2014, see References) and the practical experience from planning processes and incident responses in different European countries. Many further backgrounds and details can be found in the IPIECA Guide.

### 2.10.2.2 Wildlife response planning

The relevance of an integrated wildlife response plan in place is that objectives, preferred strategies and resources are defined and need not to be negotiated during spill response. This guarantees swift mobilisation of officers and resources. It also provides the best guarantee for the use of appropriate response, rehabilitation and health and safety protocols, efficient use of resources and likelihood of a successful claim to a P&I Club and/or International Oil Pollution Compensations Funds (IOPC Funds) afterwards.

An agreed and published plan is also of great communication value: the details of the plan can be used to explain ongoing activities to the media and to the general public (e.g. via a website).

In developing a plan it should be considered to include a separate section that explains where, when, why and how a decision would be made to call in assistance from abroad. A published English translation or an executive summary would allow the smooth communication with pre-defined international actors and who could use this information to optimise their contribution to the response.

The smooth integration of wildlife responders from abroad into a national or sub-national/local response is facilitated if the wildlife response plan is based on internationally agreed standards of good practice which are familiar to both the local and international responders.

Therefore, the Contracting Parties are recommended to make available and exchange relevant details on wildlife response plans that would facilitate the converging of aims, strategies and methodologies in the Bonn Agreement area, including:

- When was the wildlife response plan established? Date of last update.
- Who is the owner of the plan?
- What is the legal and policy framework for the plan?
- How is this plan integrated to the existing plan(s) for oil spill response?
- Is an English version or executive summary available (+downloadable)?
- What is/are the main objective (s) of wildlife response?
- What is the agreed strategy of wildlife response?
- Who are the participants in the response plan? Is their contribution formalised?
- Is a tiered response designed?
- How are health, safety and environment (HSE) issues addressed?
- Which human resources are available for operations?
- Which technical resources are in place?
- How is the plan maintained, trained, exercised and improved?

### 2.10.2.3 Aims of a wildlife response

The wildlife response should aim to:

- prevent, minimise and assess impacts on wildlife populations,
- prevent the continued suffering of individual oiled animals,
- where applicable ensure the coordinated involvement of responders from government, private sector, NGOs and/or volunteers from the general public with due attention to HSE procedures.

### 2.10.2.4 Minimum Standards

A wildlife response plan should always be based on achieving at least the minimum standards of good practice. There are various issues that require attention in this respect, which are briefly discussed below:

1. Health, safety and environment standards
2. Animal welfare standards
3. Rehabilitation protocols
4. Requirements for equipment
5. Wildlife impact assessment and post release survival monitoring

#### Health, safety and environment standards

Wildlife response should be carried out according to the same HSE standards that are applicable for oil spill response. This includes issues such as requirements for personal protection equipment, risk analysis, waste management. In addition, health and safety requirements must be put in place for working with wild animals. HSE issues that should be considered in connection with an oiled wildlife response are explained in the box below. Various publications also provide guidance on this topic (see References).

Box: HSE issues to be considered for oiled wildlife response in the Bonn Agreement area

Oiled wildlife responders typically face two categories of HSE issues when responding to oiled wildlife:

- HSE issues related to working in an oil polluted environment.
- HSE issues related to working with wild animals both in the field and in facilities.

With regard to onshore wildlife response (the collection of live and dead animals), and the specific requirements for dealing with oil pollution, the general HSE standards of oil spill response will apply. This includes protocols and training with regard to:

- Cautious behaviour in natural hazardous areas
- The use of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) when entering and working in polluted zones,
- Minimising polluted waste and secondary pollution.

With regard to dealing with live oiled animals, additional health and safety standards must apply. These include protocols and training with regard to 5 basic principles (IPIECA, 2014):

- The maintenance of safe working conditions and procedures
- The understanding of occupational health
- An understanding of potential hazards of working with oiled wildlife
- The wearing of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- The practice of good personal hygiene.

### **Animal welfare standards**

Animal welfare standards may differ between countries and different legal requirements for dealing with wild and injured animals may apply. A response plan should refer to national or sub-national/local legislation as appropriate and provide clear guidance as how wildlife responders should deal with animals and their welfare.

### **Rehabilitation protocols**

If the rehabilitation of oiled animals is attempted protocols must be used that are known to be successful. A wide range of protocols have been developed by organisations that deal with oiled animals on a regular basis. Organisations that have a record of responding to oiled wildlife incidents internationally and often together, have developed and maintain joint methodologies and principles that are based on scientific analyses and insights. These methodologies must be used for best results, as they represent the minimum standards mentioned above as well as the present best practice.

Although rehabilitation protocols are kept by individual organizations and not easily available, increasingly training courses are being provided. A recent European initiative (EUROWA – European Oiled Wildlife Assistance Network), see [www.eurowa.eu](http://www.eurowa.eu)) aims to enhance the use and development of protocols and best practices and supports the development of expertise in the European coastal countries.

### **Requirements for equipment**

A set of basic equipment needs to be readily available as part of the response planning and preparedness. If equipment is not available from permanent response centres, the development of mobile equipment or mobile units should be considered. Alternatively such units may exist in neighbouring countries and could be made available in case of an emergency.

### **Wildlife impact assessment and post release survival monitoring**

Systematic scientific data gathering during and after a wildlife response is necessary to allow a reliable assessment of impact. Applying internationally agreed guidelines for wildlife impact assessment (EUROWA Part H Oil Impact Assessment Handbook) will maximise the value of these scientific efforts in an international context, where it is important to monitor the status of vulnerable populations and to explain significant changes in their development and survival.

Also of scientific importance is the systematic study of the survival of cleaned and rehabilitated animals after their release. This requires an intensified and concerted international effort to report on the presence, behaviour and breeding success of these animals on the breeding colonies. Such studies should be laid down in the wildlife response plan as an inextricable element of oiled wildlife rehabilitation and be designed and coordinated at an international level.

### 2.10.2.6 Response options

A number of response activities may be considered in order to achieve the aims of wildlife response (see table).

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions that can be considered</b>	<b>What is “best practice”?</b>	<b>Handbooks and Guidelines that provide guidance</b>
Prevent and minimise impacts on wildlife populations	Oil combat at sea	Oil spill response plan Availability of vulnerability maps that include (seasonal) distribution of vulnerable wildlife at sea Pre-identified biologists who could assist in aerial surveillance and the interpretation of real-time field data	EUROWA Part H Oil Impact Assessment Handbook <sup>1</sup> ; IPIECA Good Practice Guide on Oiled Wildlife Preparedness, 2014 <sup>2</sup>
	Protect sensitive areas (booming off)	Availability of vulnerability maps that include (seasonal) distribution of vulnerable wildlife in coastal areas	EUROWA Part H Oil Impact Assessment Handbook
	Deterrence and hazing	Have predefined plans in place with reference to effective methods per species	North American handbooks
	Pre-emptive capture	Having predefined plans in place, which include directions for the treatment and fate of captured animals	Case studies in literature
Prevent the continued suffering of individual oiled animals	(Live animals) capture, clean, rehabilitate and release	Systematically search beaches Operate rehabilitation facilities Operate internationally approved methodologies/protocols Apply agreed triage criteria Banding of animals that are ready to be released Apply post release monitoring research	EUROWA Part B Animal care during an oiled wildlife response <sup>1</sup> ; IPIECA Good Practice Guide on Oiled Wildlife Preparedness; EUROWA Part G – Basic Oiled Wildlife Response Manual <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.eurowa.eu](http://www.eurowa.eu)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ipieca.org](http://www.ipieca.org)

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions that can be considered</b>	<b>What is “best practice”?</b>	<b>Handbooks and Guidelines that provide guidance</b>
	(Live animals) capture, euthanise humanely	Systematically search beaches Operate euthanasia facilities Have agreed euthanasia techniques	EUROWA Part B Animal care during an oiled wildlife response; IPIECA Good Practice Guide to Oiled Wildlife Preparedness <sup>2</sup> ; EUROWA Part G – Basic Oiled Wildlife Response Manual
Assess impacts on wildlife populations	(Dead animals) collect, administrate mortality per species; collect specimens for further research	Systematically search beaches	EUROWA Part H Oil Impact Assessment Handbook
Coordinated involvement of multiple stakeholders, including NGO’s and volunteers	Operate a pre-spill defined plan Have formal agreements in place Provide for a clear, integrated command structure	Develop and agree an OWR plan before the incident, involving all responders Have the plan trained and exercised regularly	Guide to oiled wildlife response planning; Examples from various countries in Europe, incl. in Bonn and HELCOM area; EUROWA Part G – Basic Oiled Wildlife Response Manual
Health, Safety and Environment	Health and safety of responders at all times as a matter of highest priority Minimise polluted waste and avoid secondary pollution	No wildlife response if health and safety of the responders cannot be guaranteed Require a minimum level of training from all accredited responders Volunteers being instructed and supervised Provide protective clothing	Guide to oiled wildlife response planning; Examples from various countries in Europe, incl. in Bonn and HELCOM area; EUROWA Part G – Basic Oiled Wildlife Response Manual

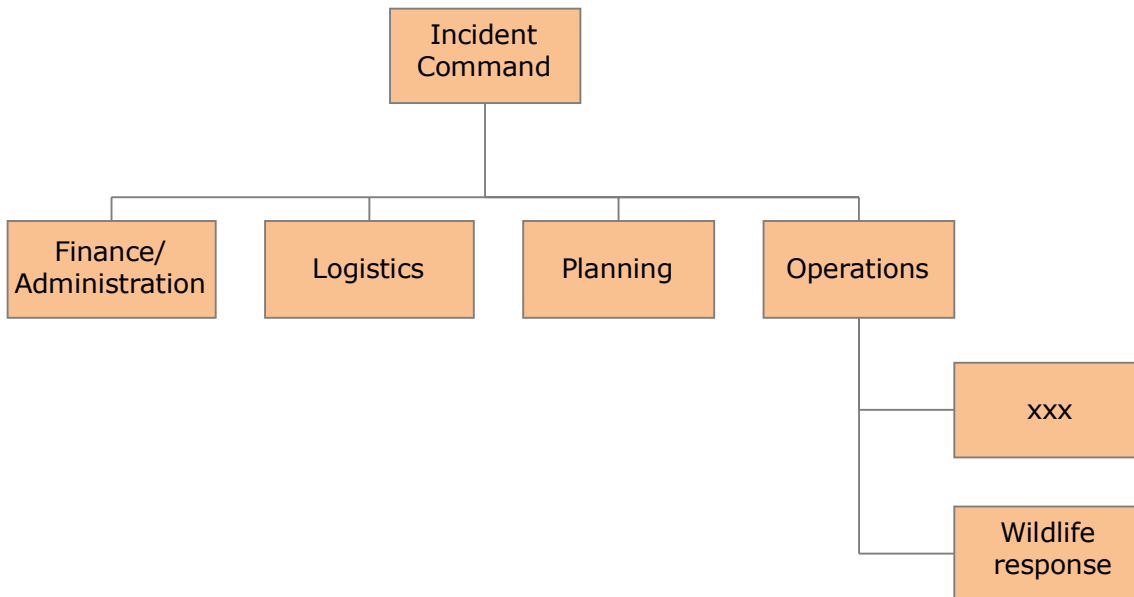
### 2.10.2.7 Strategy

The strategy of a plan specifies how the described aims will be achieved under various scenarios.

In certain cases the agreed aims and principles of a wildlife response plan may require a strategic area-specific and/or season-specific elaboration, in order to deal with the variable conditions and circumstances in different parts of the country, such as the delegated responsibilities of sub-national administrations, relative remoteness (lack of resources) of some parts of the country, area complexity, season-dependent distribution patterns of vulnerable wildlife or seasonal variations in sea and weather conditions.

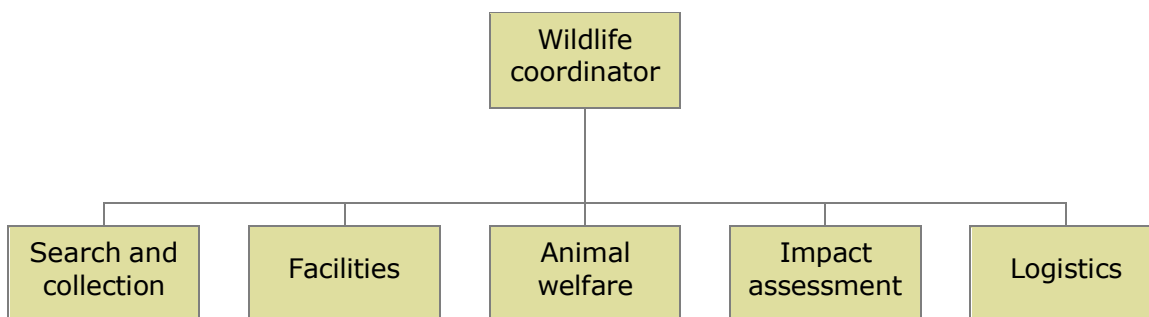
### 2.10.2.8 Integrated planning and command structure

A wildlife response plan should be integrated with an existing appropriate oil spill response plan. The structure and contents of existing contingency plans may differ strongly from country to country or even within a single country and it needs to be considered how this integration is best structured. For example, in a standard oil industry set up, wildlife response comes in under “Operations” (see Figure 2.10.1).



**Figure 2.10.1 Wildlife response is often integrated into the overall incident command system as part of “Operations”, but the actual organisation structure will differ from country to country.**

Also the wildlife response command chain can be structured in different ways. A useful approach that could be considered is to identify a wildlife coordinator who oversees all different aspects of the wildlife response, each of which could be coordinated by a separate officer (see Figure 2.10.2) in case of a larger incident. In such a case, the wildlife coordinator should work from, or be represented in the Incident Command Centre, where all real time information comes together and from where decisions are taken.



**Figure 2.10.2 Example of a simple oiled wildlife response organisation chart. The contributions of foreign experts often include the set up and running of a rehabilitation facility, impact assessment, search and collection, and/or overall coaching. Groups or individual experts can be integrated into the organisation chart accordingly.**

Although the function of the wildlife coordinator is best taken by an authority official, the roles of other coordinators could be taken by officers from groups and organisations that are formally part of the wildlife response plan. The roles and tasks of each coordinator are described in the operational section of the plan. The roles and responsibilities of organisations (governmental institutions, NGOs, industry bodies, private organisations and others) are best described in the strategy section of the plan, eventually following separate bilateral agreements.

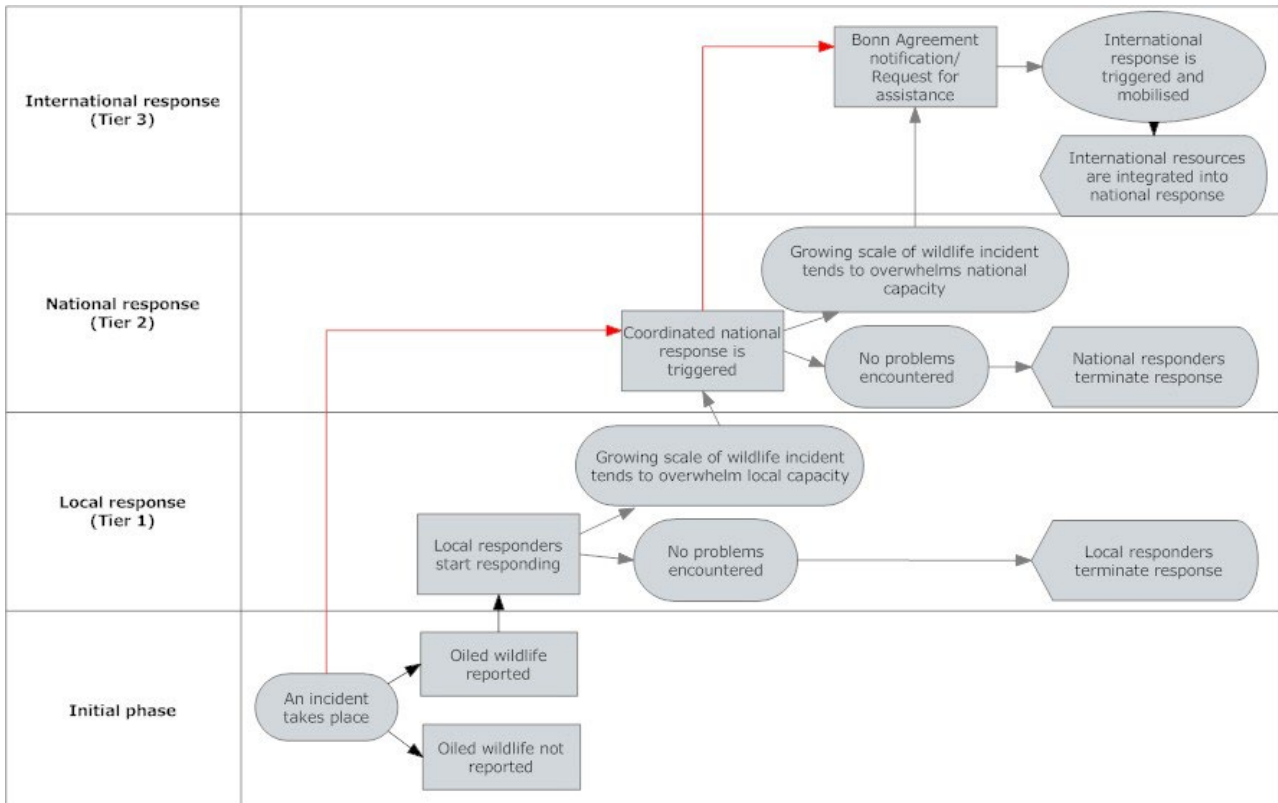
One of the most important and difficult aspects of managing a wildlife response successfully is keeping oversight of day to day developments in relation to the set objectives of the response plan and plan and manage the activities accordingly. The individuals with key responsibilities should be trained to their job. Such training is



available via international resources. In case of a worst case scenario developing, experienced individuals from international organisations can provide onsite management assistance.

### 2.10.2.9 Tiered response

Relatively small incidents are easier to deal with at a national level than large and complicated incidents. Contracting States should make an assessment of the limits of national capacity in relation to different incident scenarios. The Tiered Response concept is suitable for this, where Tier 1 is local response, Tier 2 a national response eventually involving ad-hoc assistance from neighbouring countries and Tier 3 an international response requiring involvement of resources that are available from abroad (see Figure 2.10.3).



**Figure 2.10.3 An illustration of the tiered response. In the response plan the capacity limits of each response tier should be clearly described, as well as the decision making process that facilitates the escalation into a next tier. The red arrows indicate that short-cuts should allow an immediate mobilisation of a Tier-2 or Tier-3 response, on the basis of a developing worst case scenario.**

It is important for countries to evaluate at which incident scale the national capacity would be overwhelmed, e.g. by the number of involved wildlife or the complexity of the incident. As soon as these capacity limits are being approached in a real-time scenario, the response should escalate from a Tier-2 into Tier-3 scenario. Furthermore, Contracting States should list in advance which resources would be required from abroad in a Tier-3 response, and from where these resources can be invited. This would include e.g. response management assistance, animal care assistance, mobile response units and/or specialised equipment. They should be prepared to cover the costs of mobilised resources from abroad, according to the Bonn Agreement arrangements for international assistance. It should be borne in mind that international compensation regimes include wildlife response as one of the issues that can be included in a claim (see the Claims Manual published by the IOPC Fund in 2008). Having operated according to a pre-spill defined plan strongly supports the justification of such a claim.

### 2.10.2.10 The involvement of volunteers

The involvement of volunteers has been important in past wildlife responses, reducing the costs of the relatively labour intensive work that is involved. A volunteer can be defined as an individual who desires to assist with the response out of free will and therefore is involved as an unpaid work force and not as an employee.

Health, safety and liability issues must be considered very carefully before involving volunteers in wildlife response activities. The deployment of volunteers in national or state oil pollution response will not always be possible or desirable. If volunteers are to be used their activities must be well planned, coordinated, supervised and fully integrated into the overall oil pollution response. The person or authority responsible for the overall oil pollution response must determine if, where and when volunteers can be deployed and who will be responsible for their planning, coordination and supervision.

Different types of volunteers can be defined:

1. (Employees of) an NGO that offers its assistance as a voluntary body, ready to get involved and taking responsibilities without necessarily a formal contract or a demand for payment.
2. An individual who is affiliated with an NGO such as described under type 1 but having the status of an internal “volunteer”. This type of volunteer is often well trained. Although perhaps not full time available, this type of volunteer will be well coordinated by the NGO in question and make an effective contribution to the response.
3. A member of the general public who offers his/her labour free of charge to the response organisation but is untrained and not affiliated to any organisation.

In the case of types 1 and 2, a considerable workforce can be mobilised if the right NGOs are identified and invited to play a role in the response plan by means of a formalised agreement. As part of this agreement the accredited NGO could be invited to participate in specific training programmes with regard to HSE and management aspects of an oil spill response. Also as part of the agreement, financial compensation may be addressed. In case a claim can be submitted to a compensation mechanism (P&I Club or IOPC Funds), the NGO could submit its own claim or make it part of the national claim. In the latter case the responsible authority may consider compensating the NGO’s expenses in advance.

In case of a volunteer of type 3 (member of the general public), the health safety and liability issues are considerable and the involvement of these kinds of volunteers should therefore be considered very carefully. This type of volunteer must not be charged with key responsibilities, but if deployed given simple tasks under supervision after having received basic on-the-spot training. Health and safety risks should be avoided to the widest possible extent and appropriate insurances must be in place. There are examples of NGOs working in close relationship with the authorities using a professional infrastructure for the recruitment, training and supervision of this type of volunteer.

For more information on the involvement of volunteers in oiled wildlife response operations, see EUROWA Part B – Animal care during an oiled wildlife response. ([www.eurowa.eu](http://www.eurowa.eu)).

### 2.10.2.11 Finances

Most countries have in place an emergency budget for (marine pollution) emergencies. In the framework of the elaboration of an integrated wildlife response plan it should be considered whether also the costs of a wildlife response and all its possible aspects (see section 2.10.2.5) could be covered by this budget. Especially in large scale spills, these costs tend to be only a small fraction in relation to the total costs of the incident response.

International mechanisms are available that have been set up to compensate for the costs of oil spill response and oil spill damage (e.g. International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, IOPC Fund Conventions, Bunker Convention). Wildlife response is recognised by these mechanisms, and the main requirements for a justifiable claim in this respect are described in the 2018 edition of the Claims Manual of the IOPC Funds.

There are also other situations in which it is still unclear or unlikely that one or more of these international compensation mechanism are applicable to the case and in the end will be ready to receive claims. A wildlife response cannot be postponed until the issues around “who pays the bills?” have been resolved. It is recommended that the possibilities of financing large scale wildlife response during oil pollution events should be examined foreseeing future spills so that even in the more obscure pollution events, a smooth and coordinated wildlife response will be possible

### **2.10.3 Part 2: The use of POLREP for oiled wildlife incidents**

Lines 53-56 of POLINF should be used as follows:

#### **PART II (POLINF)**

- 53. Report on oiled wildlife
- 54. Action taken on oiled wildlife
- 55. Forecast oiling of wildlife
- 56. Evidence taken from oiled wildlife
- 57. Spare
- 59. Spare
- 60. Acknowledge

Lines 88-90 of POLFAC should be used as follows:

#### **PART III (POLFAC)**

- 88. Request for wildlife response assistance
- 89. Pre-arrangement for wildlife response assistance
- 90. To where wildlife assistance should be rendered
- 91. Spare
- 98. Spare
- 99. Acknowledge

### **2.10.4 Part 3: General principles and guidelines for the integration of foreign expertise into a national oiled wildlife response**

#### **2.10.4.1 General principles**

General principles of good practice with regard to oiled wildlife response include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ensuring health and safety of responders and the general public are always the first priority of response
- Objectives and strategy are clearly defined at the start of the response by being an organic part of pre-spill planning
- National legislation applies at all times
- Invited foreign response groups and personnel (e.g. EUROWA) can only work under licence and supervision provided by national authorities
- Foreign response groups and personnel require an official invitation by the competent national authorities
- Professional international responders should be compensated for their incurred time and expenses, if formally and invited and deployed as part of an authority-led response

- Criteria and procedures for euthanasia, rehabilitation and release, that are indicated also in the oiled wildlife response plan, are set by national authorities and can only be applied under their supervision. Criteria and procedures are best defined in the oiled wildlife response plan
- Activities always aim at meeting highest standards of animal welfare. Euthanasia is used as a means of minimising animal suffering in cases where rehabilitation does not apply or is limited in capacity. If rehabilitation is an option, it should only be conducted if adequate resources can be provided, with reasonable expectation of minimised suffering and maximised post-release survival of treated animals
- It is clearly defined how the contributions of response groups (expert/non-expert NGOs) and volunteers (self-mobilising citizens) will be integrated into the response activity, and how these contributions will be coordinated and controlled.

#### **2.10.4.2 Polluter pays**

The Polluter Pays principle will be applied where possible, and claims should include the costs of a wildlife response. From the beginning, the wildlife response should be treated as an integrated part of the overall spill costs and claims structure. The probability that a claim is successful (i.e. paid by the Polluter) is enhanced if the wildlife response:

- is carried out in an organised and coordinated manner
- follows an agreed plan
- applies proven methodologies and internationally acknowledged protocols
- involves trained expertise and reliable parties who are informed about the recuperation of costs incurred
- follows a procedure to register and report reasonable wildlife costs from day 1 of the incident (e.g. timesheets, financial records, personnel assignments, travel and accommodation costs etc.).

#### **2.10.4.3 Wildlife scenarios and cooperation**

A spill of oil or other harmful substances in the marine environment of the Bonn Agreement area has the potential to affect marine birds and mammals. Marine birds, in particular, could wash ashore in large numbers following an incident. The purpose of a fully integrated wildlife response strategy is to prevent and mitigate the effects of a pollution incident on animals, their habitats and populations. Such a strategy incorporates international objectives, allows the blending of national and international expert resources, and allows for cooperation on cross border aspects.

#### **2.10.4.4 International objectives of a wildlife response**

Wildlife response should serve the international objectives of species and habitat conservation and agreed international principles to deal professionally with animal welfare aspects.

##### **Conservation**

Decisions concerning wildlife response by one Contracting Party (CP) can strongly impact the nature conservation interests of another CP or the conservation objectives of the wider Convention. Species of conservation value (Red List species) will require priority attention but others will still need to be considered, especially if they are impacted in large numbers. A minimum requirement is that data are systematically gathered on the numbers of animals of every species that are impacted by a pollution incident. This requires a scientific lead and analysis to make sure the data and results are reliable, and to include number per species, sex, adult-juveniles and additional biometric data that could connect them to a breeding colony. For certain species, an explicit effort to try to rescue and rehabilitate live animals may be required from a conservation perspective.

## **Animal welfare**

A pollution incident may lead to live animals appearing on the shoreline suffering from the pollution. These animals cannot be left to the intentions of self-mobilising citizens or unexperienced NGOs as it requires a professional approach to deal effectively with the various and complex issues of animal welfare. This needs predefined objectives, well elaborated strategies in the field of rehabilitation and/or euthanasia and the guaranteed availability of key resources. Most important is i) operational lead from the authorities and ii) the involvement of pre-identified experts who can apply accepted science-based methodologies and recognised international standards and protocols for rehabilitation and/or euthanasia, and who should also be assigned to lead and manage these technical operations.

### **2.10.4.5 Applicable tools and principles**

#### **Wildlife response via spill response measures**

1. Proactive and reactive measures should be taken to prevent pollutants approaching sensitive habitats or large concentration of animals. Incident managers need to be fully aware of these environmental risks by having access to operational scientific data and/or scientists who can indicate where wildlife concentrations are located in relation of the oil as well as how behaviour and patterns may change over time. With this overall picture, managers will have the opportunity to prioritise the use of resources and reduce the number of animals that eventually can or will be polluted. They also have the opportunity to notify key authorities who in turn can consider the timely (or pro-active) mobilisation and deployment of resources that are needed for an on the shore wildlife response.

2. Due consideration should be given to the effects that certain response operations could have on (the behaviour) of wildlife present in the operational area, or on the durable quality of their habitats. The involvement of scientists with specific local or regional knowledge is important and may lead to a wiser application of measures that serve wildlife objectives without compromising the combat requirements.

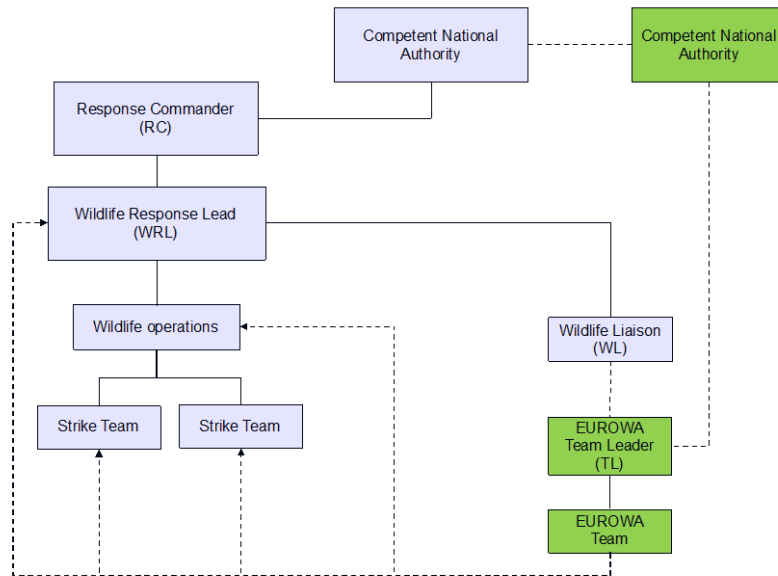
#### **An integrated operational wildlife cell**

The lead authority of the wildlife response should set up an operational cell with a team of managers that can oversee all the strategic, tactical and operational aspects of the wildlife response. This cell must be fully integrated into the overall incident management to the effect that:

- The wildlife response is well funded and resourced, and can be made part of the Polluter Pays principle.
- Wildlife response decision-making becomes part of the overall incident response decision-making and information can be optimally shared between all components of the response to inform the decisions.
- The wildlife response cell can optimally deal with cross border issues, including international information sharing, optimising resources on both sides of a border, benefiting efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- Expertise and equipment can be resourced from abroad, using the general guidelines as described in Chapters 2.10.4.2 to 2.10.4.4.

#### **Command structure for accommodating strike teams from abroad**

The requesting Party shall provide a clear command structure for oiled wildlife response as an integrated part of the overall oil spill response command structure (see Figure 2.10.4). The Assisting Party (e.g. EUROWA, NGO, individual foreign experts) will be informed about this structure and given a clear role and responsibility as a part of that command system.



**Figure 2.10.4 Command structure of the Requesting Party (purple) and command structure of the Assisting Party (green). A EUROWA Team has been taken as an example. Solid lines are management relationships. Dotted lines are communication lines; dotted arrows are technical assistance.**

The invited contributions of experts from abroad often include the set up and running of a rehabilitation facility, scientific impact assessment, search and collection and/or management coaching. Groups or individual experts can be integrated into the command structure accordingly.

The Assisting Party, when considered as an organised group or Network, is expected to have its own command structure, including a Strike Team Leader (TL) with controlling power over the mobilised international group. The TL will liaise directly with the Wildlife Liaison (WL) who facilitates the Strike Team on behalf of the Wildlife Response Lead (WRL). The Assisting Party will be asked to provide:

- names and affiliation of the experts in the proposed team
- internal command structure of the team
- expertise they can give
- their operational needs if integrated into the national response.

The Assisting Party will be kept informed at all times by the Wildlife Liaison (WL, c.f. Liaison Officer see Chapter 2). The WL has a direct link to the national command structure and is mandated to deal with the foreign experts. The Lead Country provides all means feasible to ease the work of the foreign experts.

### **Cross border information exchange and cooperation**

Wildlife authorities leading the wildlife operational cells on both sides of a border should be enabled to exchange relevant information and make requests to each other that would make the overall response more effective, reduce overall costs of the response, and allow an optimised use of resources. This exchange could include, for example, the formal approval and generation of documentation for transport of captured oiled animals across the border, in the case that a higher quality of care can be provided on the other side of the border.

#### 2.10.4.6 National preparedness

It is recommended that Bonn Agreement Contracting Parties, as a matter of their national preparedness, all have in place:

- A strategy and tactical plan with clear objectives and identified resources
- A leading wildlife authority that sets up an operational cell to manage the wildlife response
- Trained and exercised national resources including experts and equipment
- A wildlife contact point for mobilisation and accommodation of international responders.

#### 2.10.4.7 Preparedness between Contracting Parties

It is recommended that Contracting Parties share information on their mechanisms of international preparedness. This includes e.g.

- The identification of wildlife authorities in different parts of the North Sea that could facilitate cross-border information exchange and cooperation
- Overview of stockpiles of wildlife response equipment
- Exchanges about the level of preparedness in different CPs, via the Self-Assessment Tool, and descriptions of this preparedness.

#### 2.10.4.8 Strike teams for wildlife response

Strike teams for wildlife response can be defined as operational groups that are deployed to carry out field operations or facility operations as follows:

- Reconnaissance strike team. Operational group that inspects parts of affected area (aerial surveillance) or coastline (by boat or vehicle) to monitor and identify wildlife threatened or affected. They report on numbers of observed animals and their location, degree of oiling, species, occurrences, required resources for capture.
- Search and collection strike team. Operational group that can take care of the search capture and collection of affected animals in a defined sector of the coast. The group will need resources such as vehicles, equipment, shelter.
- Hazing/deterrence strike team. Operational group that attempts scaring away animals from coastal or marine areas that are affected by oil.
- Impact Assessment strike team. Operational group that oversees the collection of all dead animals, the documentation, sampling and storage, analysis via necropsy and biometry, and reporting.
- Field stabilisation strike team. Operational group that sets up and operates a field stabilisation centre (when required), where affected animals can be stabilised (48 h minimum) before transported to a full rehabilitation centre.
- Rehabilitation strike team. Operational group that sets up and operates a full rehabilitation centre where affected animals can be stabilised, washed, rehabilitated and from where they can be released to the wild with a scientific tag.

Only one source of personnel exists in Europe from where all types of international strike teams can be invited: the EUROWA Network.

#### 2.10.4.9 Assistance from the EUROWA Network

The EUROWA network can be activated via a notification to Sea Alarm (BE), which can be done directly, or via CECIS. The EUROWA Standard Operating Procedure will be operated which can lead to the mobilisation of an international response team of qualified experts. The Team is headed by a Team Leader (TL) who acts as the point of contact for the Wildlife Liaison (WL) of the Requesting Party. The EUROWA Team also has a dedicated Technical

Director (TD) who takes care of the technical leadership and the deployment of Team Members, when arrived in-country.

The EUROWA network can provide assistance via various fields of expertise:

- Wildlife response management: overall management, field ops management, facility ops management
- Field activities: expert personnel for field strike teams
- Facility operations: expert personnel for rehabilitation facilities and veterinary care
- Qualified EUROWA experts work according to established international guidelines as published by EUROWA and IPIECA (see References).

#### 2.10.4.10 Training and exercises

Oiled wildlife responder training is available through the EUROWA initiative. Training according to the EUROWA qualifications will enable the development of wildlife expertise in different countries, while these trained resources can provide mutual assistance across borders using a common set of wildlife protocols and standards. Such mutual assistance can be facilitated via the EUROWA SOP, by which a coordinated international Team is formed (see section 2.10.4.9), or directly via bilateral exchange between two CP's.

EUROWA has published Guidelines for Wildlife response exercises, which includes the design and development of wildlife exercises following the Bonn Agreement categories and nomenclature as described in Chapter 1.14 of the Manual.

<p><b>BONNEX ALPHA-W (wildlife table top exercise)</b> A table top wildlife exercise in which a wildlife scenario is introduced to a group of participants who represent two or more CPs. The ALPHA-W can be integrated into another ALPHA table top or even a DELTA or DELTA-W exercise.</p>
<p><b>BONNEX BRAVO-W (wildlife alarm exercise)</b> Currently the EUROWA Module could be tested as part of a BONNEX BRAVO exercise, by sending a request via CECIS. In the future, when CP's would have their own internationally qualified response personnel, teams or equipment, BRAVO-W exercises could include the request for these systems via bilateral or multilateral communications.</p>
<p><b>BONNEX CHARLIE-W (wildlife equipment exercise)</b> For wildlife this could include an exercise in which a full equipment solution could be mobilised for a demonstration, or used for training.</p>
<p><b>BONNEX DELTA-W (wildlife operational exercise)</b> A host country CP could design and plan for a wildlife exercise in which field activities or facility activities are simulated by (teams of) trained personnel. The interaction between personnel from different CPs will be useful to explore common standards for animal handling, management, documentation and communication.</p>
<p><i>BOX: Description of exercises that can be designed and organised in the field of wildlife response</i></p>

#### 2.10.4.11 References

Bonn Agreement Contracting Parties jointly recognise and agree on the use of the following guidelines and documents to be applied in oiled wildlife preparedness and response:

- [Good Practice Guide on Oiled Wildlife Response Preparedness \(IPIECA\)](#)
- [Key Principles for the Protection, Care and Rehabilitation of Oiled Wildlife \(IPIECA\)](#)
- [Claims Manual \(IOPC\)](#)
- [EUROWA documentation and manuals](#)
- <https://wwz.cedre.fr/en/Resources/Publications/Operational-Guides/Wildlife-Rehabilitation>