The countries bordering the North Sea work together within the Bonn Agreement to undertake aerial surveillance using specially equipped aircraft and personnel to detect spills of oil and other harmful substances and enforce international environmental regulations.

In 2020, Contracting Parties carried out 4179 hours of National Surveillance Flights and reported the estimated volumes for 104 slicks in the Bonn Agreement area. The figure opposite shows the oil slicks subdivided into different size categories by amount, including spills where volume was not estimated. No spills over 100m³ were reported during 2020, with the largest being 2.75m³. The number of confirmed detections was 63% higher than in 2019. Most slicks were in a size category that did not warrant action to combat them, since they would evaporate, dissolve and disperse naturally.