



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Twelfth Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working
Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 12-2018)

EWG OWR 12-2018

Online meeting, 18.10.2018

Document title	Outcome of EWG OWR 11-2018
Code	3-1
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Agenda Item	3- EWG OWR Activities
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Background

The document contains the Outcome of the Eleventh Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 11-2018).

Action required

The Meeting is invited to recall the Outcome of EWG 11-2018



Outcome of the Eleventh Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 11-2018)

Introduction

0.1 The Eleventh Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 10-2018) was held as an online meeting on 1 June 2018.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by representatives of Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Sweden as well as Sea Alarm and WWF. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**. Consent for publication of the list of participants, and the information contained therein, was received by all participants.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Hugo Nijkamp, Sea Alarm and Chair of EWG OWR. Mr. Markus Helavuori, HELCOM Professional Secretary assisted by Mr. Alexey Bakhtov, acted as Secretaries of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Document: 1-1

1.1 The Meeting adopted the agenda as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Update on planning/preparedness in Contracting Parties

2.1 The Meeting took note of the following national OWR planning and preparedness activities which have taken place since last meeting:

- Estonia: Estonian Fund for Nature will keep working on the oiled wildlife issues, it has applied for a project funding and will start working on it from July 2018, trainings will be organised as well. National oil response exercise will be organised in autumn (tentatively in September), Environmental Board is involved in organising this training. Response exercise at the sea was organized in May 2018 together with Finnish partners (oil response vessels) but oiled wildlife was not involved in the exercise. A tabletop exercise organized by Western Uusimaa rescue department will be held on 30 August 2018.
- Finland: Situation is developing, responsibility for oil accidents is being transferred to border guards, and some personnel from SYKE will continue working on OWR issues. SYKE will not handle the problem of oiled birds in near future. Preliminarily, a decision will be made in October. Meeting of a national OWR group in March discussed this topic. Larger meeting which will include field exercise with a wildlife component at the sea is planned on 17-22 September 2018 in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland. The EWG OWR members are all welcome as observers. More detailed information will be circulated later.

WWF Finland is willing to participate, this will be confirmed upon internal discussions. WWF informed about the discussions on joint field cleaning exercise with South Finland Rescue Service. There will be a joint tabletop exercise in South of Finland on 7-8 September. Volunteer groups will also run a full scale exercise with boats.

- Germany: Planning and preparedness is still in progress. Small scale exercises are planned in early June with OWR activities integrated. Larger exercises will be similar as last year and will include training and courses for involved parties, and first level of response is getting more concrete. Top

table exercise and larger training event (preliminarily in October-November 2018) is planned be held on the annual basis, and will highlight wildlife response topics. Work on developing an overall OWR plan (outlining the common approach of the regional plans) is progressing in cooperation with different agencies.

- Latvia: Partial funding is now available to prepare a plan for OWR activities. First results are expected by mid-June 2018. As it is only partial funding, work is expected to be continued next year. As a first phase, information on the existing plans from other countries will be collected and analysed. Upon completion of this part a meeting will be held to share results.
- Sweden: Not much changes happened during the last months. Responsibilities regarding OWR are split. Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has overall strategy on oil spill preparedness and Swedish Coast Guard is responsible for activities at sea and municipalities on shore. Swedish EPA has not decided yet whether national guidelines should be developed. No exercises except for national exercise connected with BALEX DELTA are planned in the near future.

Agenda Item 3 EWG OWR activities

Documents: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3

3.1 The Meeting took note of the Sea Alarm presentation to HELCOM RESPONSE 24-2018 (10-12 April 2018, Klaipeda, Lithuania).

3.2 The Meeting discussed mass euthanasia of oiled seabirds, as an alternative for rehabilitation. The Meeting recognized that euthanasia is an important response tool to have available for challenging scenarios where not all animals can be rehabilitated. How to organise and implement mass euthanasia is currently topic of discussion in the Netherlands. Mass euthanasia of seabirds needs thorough planning and preparedness (including search and collection of animals), especially to find and train veterinarians to oversee these activities and carry them out safely and humanely. It goes hand in hand with a well elaborated communication strategy to ensure that the public understands the course of action and do not massively turn against it.

3.3 The Meeting discussed existing practices of protocols of mass euthanasia in the Baltic countries. Such standard procedure exists only in Denmark. No other countries developed mass euthanasia as standard activity for OWR. Activities that addresses the safe methods of euthanasia and public awareness issues is underway in the Netherlands. Euthanasia based on international standard was performed in Germany individually by skilled staff. WWF has developed a scheme for euthanasia of birds.

3.4 The Meeting agreed that Contracting Parties need to develop an overall strategy as well as communication strategy for mass euthanasia as an OWR tool. More research is needed on mass euthanasia and rehabilitation of birds.

3.5 The Meeting took note that RESPONSE 24-2018 discussed the importance to produce a list of stockpiles of oil and wildlife response equipment. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to report on the lists of available equipment stockpiles to the Secretariat by the next meeting.

3.6 The Meeting took note that RESPONSE 24-2018 discussed the potential useful roles that NGOs could play in an emergency response situation, not only for wildlife response. NGOs could be engaged in national emergency cooperation led by authorities and trained on the basis of international standards. Existing systems of mutual assistance need to be revisited so that they can include NGOs to assist with emergencies abroad.

3.7 The Meeting discussed the revised draft of the oiled wildlife preparedness self-assessment tool (SAT 2.0) developed by Sea Alarm (document 3-1). OTSOPA has decided to use the SAT which was developed for Baltic Sea. North Sea countries have also filled SAT which gives good overview of present situation in the region. The Chair will circulate the results report to the group by the next meeting.

3.8 The Meeting decided to check, and if needed to modify the statements of euthanasia in SAT and to report by the next meeting. The Meeting decided further that the group can adopt SAT at the next meeting and propose to HELCOM REPOSE in 2019 as a reporting tool.

3.9 The Meeting took note that the EWG-OWR Chair will attend the HELCOM BALEX DELTA 2018, to be held in Karlskrona, Sweden, on 27-30 August 2018, and will make a presentation at one day seminar closing the event. WWF Finland will attend the exercise. The official web page can be found here <https://balexdelta2018.helcom.fi/>.

3.10 The Meeting agreed to revisit the existing paper on OWR exercise terminology (published on the work space: <https://portal.helcom.fi/workspaces/EWG%20OWR-103/Shared%20Documents/4-1%20Training%20and%20exercise%20packages%20on%20OWR.pdf>) and to include it in the agenda of EWG OWR 12-2018 for discussion.

3.11 Meeting took note of the work of SHORE Network, in which the Chair of EWG-OWR is participating, and agreed that wildlife response has to be well integrated in the work. The Secretariat will provide more information about the upcoming meeting of the SHORE Network.

3.12 The Meeting took note of and discussed a presentation provided by Ms. Nele Markones (presented by the Chair) on baseline data collection on seabird distributions in the Baltic Sea. At the EU level regular monitoring of sea bird populations is not conducted on a regular basis. Therefore the main concern is that no reliable information is currently available to assist decision makers if there is an oil spill emergency. The international monitoring programs need to be revived in order to have instruments available to predict the abundance of seabirds in the oil-affected areas, and to take valid decisions on the mobilization and scale of the oiled wildlife response. The Meeting agreed to invite Ms. Markones to attend and present the findings at EWG OWR 12-2018 (and has to be agreed for HELCOM RESPONSE meeting (25 or 26).

3.13 The Meeting discussed Chapter 11 of the HELCOM Response Manual Volume I, the review of which was assigned to EWG-OWR. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to submit to the Secretariat suggested modifications by September 2018, to be reviewed and finalized at EWG OWR 12-2018, and subsequently submitted to HELCOM RESPONSE 25-2018 or RESPONSE 26-2019.

Agenda Item 4 Training and information activities to support work of EWG OWR.

Documents: none

4.1 The Meeting took note of the information from Germany regarding further considerations on organizing a bilateral/tri-lateral meetings to discuss or exercise cross-border planning and cooperation on oiled wildlife response. The meeting dates and agenda have not been set yet. Skype for business and/or ZOOM could be used as a platform for online conferencing, technical issues will be discussed in a smaller group.

4.2 The Meeting discussed the possibility of a one day online seminar (Baltic Responder network meeting 2018), tentatively in November 2018, with lectures on euthanasia, and/or early incident response. The Secretariat will set up a doodle poll to find the date. Contracting Parties are invited to explore the possibility to give presentations. Contracting Parties are invited to submit proposals to the Secretariat on co-organizing the seminar by **19 June 2018**.

Agenda Item 5 Any other business

Documents: 5-1

5.1 The Contracting Parties checked and updated the list of contacts for EWG OWR (document 5-1) as contained in **Annex 2**.

5.2 A general description of EWG OWR can be found on the [HELCOM web page](#). EWG OWR meetings and meeting documents are found in the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#) under [upcoming meetings](#) (documents have restricted access) and [past meetings](#) (documents are publicly available). A [workspace](#) is available for EWG OWR contacts ([sign in](#) required) for sharing documents.

5.3 The Meeting took note of the information from Estonia about project proposal of Turku University with practical involvement to rescue services of NGOs.

5.4 The Meeting considered proposal of the Chair to discuss the implementation of the EUROWA philosophy under HELCOM at EWG OWR 12-2018. The EUROWA project (<http://www.oiledwildlife.eu/eurowa>) has provided good practices for oiled wildlife response and an array of training packages, which are based on the train the trainer principle. Having national responders that are certified on the basis of international good practice will significantly contribute to the national level of preparedness, but also to the preparedness of the region, as they can provide mutual assistance abroad.

Agenda Item 6 Next Meeting

6.1 The Meeting decided that the next meeting of the Group (EWG OWR 12-2018) will be held in the beginning of October 2018 and requested the Secretariat to set up a Doodle poll for deciding on the date.

Agenda Item 7 Outcome of the Meeting

Documents: 7-1

7.1 The Outcome of the Meeting has been finalized by the Secretariat and made available on the HELCOM Meeting Portal together with the meeting documents.

Annex 1. List of participants

List of participants

Representing	Name	Organization	Email
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Annex 2. Contacts of HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR)

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail address
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