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Submitted by	Sea Alarm
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Background

This document contains the report on the online seminar on early incident response for cross-border wildlife incidents was held under the auspices of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR) on 15 September 2020. The seminar was jointly prepared by the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies, Coastal Section (CCME), Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defence, National Park and Marine Conservation (LKN SH) and Sea Alarm, in partnership with the HELCOM Secretariat.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the report on the online seminar.

HELCOM EWG-OWR**Early incident response in cross-border oiled wildlife response incidents****Online Seminar****15 September 2020****09:00-12:00 CEST; 10:00-13:00 EEST/MSK**Summary

This is a report of an online seminar held under the auspices of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG-OWR), on maritime incidents involving oil or other hazardous substances, and concentrating on the cross-border aspects of an oiled wildlife response. Given the nature of the Baltic Sea proper, the nine CPs have a considerable potential to get involved in an incident scenario with cross-border complications of a wildlife response. The seminar aimed to focus on the potential co-operation and information exchange between HELCOM Contracting Parties (CPs) with regards to the oiled wildlife response that would be initiated on both sides of the border. Also exploring the benefits that CPs could have from pre-spill arrangements between leading authorities and having useful knowledge of the approaches likely to take place (and by whom) at the other side of the border in response to the same incident.

Welcome and introductions

The seminar was opened by Hugo Nijkamp, Chair of the EWG-OWR, with a warm welcome. The seminar was jointly prepared by the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies, Coastal Section (CCME), Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defence, National Park and Marine Conservation (LKN SH) and Sea Alarm, in partnership with the HELCOM Secretariat. Hugo highlighted the importance of the topic of cross-border cooperation in an area such as the Baltic.

Laura Meski also wished the participants welcome on behalf of the HELCOM Secretariat, stressing that the scenario for the tabletop exercise was a very realistic scenario to prepare for. She reminded the participants to sign up for the EWG-OWR meeting on 22nd September, where the outcomes from today's seminar can be reported to those that could not attend and the discussions can continue with the wider EWG.

The workshop was attended by authority members and observers of the EWG-OWG and a number of invited NGOs. A round of introductions was held. The participants list is attached as Annex 1.



Figure 1: Workshop participants on Zoom. Missing from screenshot: Sascha Regmann, Project Blue Sea/ProBird Germany

Tobias Zisenis of Germany outlined the agenda for the seminar, including some introductory presentations to set the Agenda of the day and the objectives of the exercise. The exercise would be based on a scenario

of a spill affecting Germany and Denmark, to look at how cross-border cooperation would work and what benefits it would bring. He introduced the Table (Annex 2) that had been filled in prior to the workshop to note the responsible authorities in each CP country for various aspects of oil spill response and oiled wildlife response as a document that would be referred to during the exercise and if necessary updated following the discussions.

Introductory presentations

Three introductory presentations were given to set the scene for the content of the seminar:

1. Vanessa Ryan, WWF Finland: 'Response in Baltic: wildlife risks and response preparedness. Vanessa outlined the considerable risks of an oil spill to wildlife in the Baltic Sea, including a fair number of species with special conservation status. She stressed the importance of having good seasonable wildlife distribution data and knowledge of the practical limitations of responding in different shoreline types.
2. Hugo Nijkamp, Sea Alarm: 'Outline of a response: infrastructure and communication'. Hugo's presentation laid out the various operational aspects of an oiled wildlife response. The need for an authority to lead a response was explained in relation to public emotion and strong values – if the public don't see authorities responding well and quickly, they will do it themselves. The infrastructure needed for an objective response is dependent on what the authorities' response objectives area, for field and facility operations (removal of oil from the environment, capture and collection, rehabilitation and euthanasia and scientific impact assessment). Hugo highlighted the importance of coordination between at-sea response, shoreline response and wildlife response, that all are working together as part of a common operating picture so information is fully shared and best use can be made of resources.
3. Saskia Sessions-Puplett, Sea Alarm: 'Advantages of cross border cooperation'. In her presentation, Saskia referred to the map that had been drawn in preparation for the workshop (see Annex 2), showing the many zones (A-R) in the Baltic sea where an oil spill could have cross-border impacts. She explained the challenges that could come from using different response strategies in neighbouring areas, noting that borders can also exist within countries (regions or municipalities). Some examples were given of where cross-border cooperation was needed in past oiled wildlife incidents and to what extent that was successful, ending with a list of the key advantages of neighbours working together – the key benefit being optimum sharing of resources and costs.

Tabletop exercise

Uda Tuenté of Germany introduced the tabletop exercise. This was based on a scenario of an oil spill in the Western Baltic, as a result of a collision between an oil tanker and a bulk carrier in an area south of Langeland and Ærø and northeast from Kiel (scenario details are provided in Annex 3). Countries directly involved are Germany and Denmark, although such a scenario could also happen in many other areas of the Baltic Sea. To explore the issues of cross-border cooperation, participants for Germany and Denmark were asked to answer three questions, see responses outlined below.

1. Please verify the reports on Oiled Wildlife (right/wrong, numbers of birds, exact location/coastal region)

- Germany, Tobias Zisenis – figures come from media, so exploration teams need to be put in place to verify, plus a communication structure to share verified figures. would aim to cover as much coastline as possible, would alert Federal agency and rangers plus own agency (ACNM-SH) to do first exploration. Rangers would get in their cars to go to specific coastlines, check how many birds on the shoreline, prioritising sensitive areas. At this time, people would not yet have all arrived in the field, takes time, need to ensure public safety. Can take at least 2 hrs to start receiving information. This communication structure set up in peace time provides a channel to verify information and avoid duplication of information.
- Denmark, Caroline Mikkelsen – able to verify because when Admiral Danish Fleet receives an oil spill notification, they contact Local nature organisations. In this case, no wildlife has been seen. If it was, Admiral Danish Fleet would report with approximate numbers, would have contacted the Ministry of Environment by now. Media will be contacted and next morning they will report on it, telling the public if they see any wildlife they should not touch and should call the local Nature

Agency with location. Police or Nature Agency will start receiving the reports and will go to the area, the local Agency involved will call Ministry of Environment. Admiral Danish fleet and Nature Agency will keep in constant contact. Ornithologists under contract to Ministry of Environment, will do surveillance and count oiled birds and provide a report. In this case no info received yet, so assume no oiled wildlife reported. Local hunters will be contacted in next days. Nature agency will liaise with the police and hunters will be assigned an ID so they are authorised to euthanise birds and to venture on private land (temporarily) if needed.

- ProBird Germany, Sascha Regmann – Pro Bird more than willing to support a wildlife response, but need a formal invitation from Authorities. If this invitation is offered, ProBird can send their own assessment team as soon as possible, including field experts to provide their own data. Wait until they have numbers from those experts before giving views.

2. Please name the competent and responsible authority/authorities in your country for OWR) (where appropriate different tasks of OWR e.g. incident management, counting Oiled Birds)

- ProBird Germany, Sascha Regmann – Tobias (ACNM-SH) are competent partner so ProBird's first call will be to them. ACNM are the ones gathering field data on oiled birds, analysing and sending it to responsible authorities. Recommend that ornithologists meet before deployment to agree rules for their work and locations they will assess (live and dead birds). ProBird own personnel would aim to meet with authorities to coordinate activities. An assessment team can be mobilized, 4 roles: IMT, vet (who could support state vets), field and rehab specialists. All in permanent contact with the others.
- Germany, Tobias Zisenis – authorities would be dealing with initial tasks, first with own staff, partner with Agency of Technical Relief, would also meet with ProBird to see if they could be integrated into the response system. Tierschutzbund (wildlife response NGO) are put on alert to prepare their rehabilitation centre if necessary. Authorities have listed organisations who need to be informed. 3 or more authorities involved: CCME for overall response, LKN SH for shoreline and wildlife responsibilities and county agencies responsible for conservation (latter not sending people, only supporting decision). Also the state vets of the county are responsible for triage (rehab and euthanasia).
- Denmark, Caroline Mikkelsen – Ministry of Environment don't get involved until wildlife is affected, waits for notification from Admiral Danish Fleet. Nature Agency is charge of local areas, works in the field. When Nature Agency gets call of an incident, always contact Ornithologists (DOF under contract to provide reports of oiled animals), to provide accurate data, can trust the numbers. If 2 Nature Agencies are involved, they stay in close contact and rely on DOF for reporting animal numbers.

3. Please ensure the regular flow of information concerning the recent status of OWR (tell the management structure for OWR linked reporting channels in your country and/or draw a picture for it, show the international gateways with neighbouring country/-ies)

- Denmark, Caroline Mikkelsen – presented diagram of communication lines. Caroline would contact Germany, although at a later stage this contact could be via Nature agency. Not sure about contacting process further in the North of Denmark (this is more for the South). Police are involved for supervising access for hunters and contacting Nature Agency if they get any reports. Admiral Danish fleet will carry out oil spill cleanup, County will provide a container for removing the dead oiled animals (shot or already dead). Strategy is to euthanise oiled birds, regardless of amount of oil. What about animals that cannot be shot? Authorities will report (be transparent) on the News about the shooting and inform the public. Have chosen this as best way of dealing with the suffering, this culture is what they do. Public are ready for that and understand.
- Tobias – presented diagram of communication lines. Contact is needed with Denmark in areas where they are responding close to the border. Information goes vertically up, only CCME (not ACNM) are in contact with the Danish Fleet.

Discussion

After the exercise, a general discussion was held. Hugo Nijkamp opened the floor for comments:

- Could Denmark think of catching birds and transporting the birds to Germany? Not sure if this is an option because the strategy to euthanise is Danish Law, but initial answer is no. Would need to be explored if possible, if Germany could organise and cover costs. German authorities would not offer this, probably own capacity will be under pressure.
- Are all birds euthanised even endangered species? What training do hunters have? Danish authorities work with a University to ascertain if any endangered species could be affected. Would deploy helicopter to aim to scare these animals away from the oil, but if they are found oiled then they will be euthanised. Hunters abide by strict rules, must be licensed, local hunters have good communication with Nature agencies, can be put on a list for response. They have a contract and know what to do, follow the rules. Ministry of Environment decides on maximum number of per animal, depending on bird size. Such discussions could be of interest for the planned EWG-OWR online seminar on euthanasia.
- Scale relationship, is there approach in the response protocols for a worst-case scenario, will capacity be available?
 - Twice a year the Admiral Danish Fleet holds oil spill exercises in different counties, involving police, media, nature agencies, counties and municipalities. Educational day before the exercise explaining roles. Next one will take place in a nature sensitive area and will exercise how to approach this issue.
 - Germany working on guidelines for this, large scale incidents where capacity is used up fast and then euthanasia is needed. Authorities would contact NGOs to increase capacity. Important next step is to provide response training for state vets at country level.

Hugo then rounded up the session by reflecting on the interesting scenario that allowed the group to gain an insight into the approach of two different countries in responding to the incident. He noted the value of the table listing authority responsibilities as being relevant to these discussions and that the EWG could consider to extend the discussion in future to include the other Contracting Parties more actively. The Table should ideally be kept at a working document, to be kept updated with precise data and therefore useful in a real incident. He thanked all the participants for taking part and particularly to Germany and Denmark for their active participation and to Germany for their help in preparing the seminar.

Laura Meski reminded the participants to sign up for the EWG meeting next week, where the outcomes of this workshop could be reported on.

Annex 1 Participants list

Email address	Country	1. What is your name and organisation?	2. What type of organisation are you from?
laura.meski@helcom.fi	HELCOM	Laura Meski, HELCOM Secretariat	Other (please specify)
vanessa.ryan@wwf.fi	Finland	Vanessa Ryan, WWF Finland	NGO
cvmik@mst.dk	Denmark	Caroline Mikkelsen, Ministry of Environment	Government
mzadrag@wwf.pl	Poland	Magda Zadrag, WWF Poland	NGO
jmoczarska@wwf.pl	Poland	Jadwiga Moczarska, WWF Poland	NGO
laura.mazmaca@vvd.gov.lv	Latvia	Laura Mazmaca, State Environmental Service	Government
udatuente@havariekommando.de	Germany	Uda Tuenta CCME Central Command for Maritime Emergencies	Government
tobias.zisenis@lkn.landsh.de	Germany	Tobias Zisenis, Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal defense, National Park and Marine conservation ACNM-SH	Government
kadri.aller@elfond.ee	Estonia	Kadri Aller, Estonian Fund for Nature (Eestimaa Looduse Fond, ELF).	NGO
pbs.herne@gmail.com	Germany	Sascha Regmann, Project Blue Sea/ProBird	NGO
nijkamp@sea-alarm.org	Sea Alarm	Hugo Nijkamp, Sea Alarm	NGO
saskia@sea-alarm.org	Sea Alarm	Saskia Sessions-Puplett, Sea Alarm	NGO
daniela@sea-alarm.org	Sea Alarm	Daniela Barreras Biesot, Sea Alarm	NGO
agni.kaldma@envir.ee	Estonia	Agni Kaldma, Ministry of Environment	Government

Annex 2 Authority responsibilities

Contracting Party	Location	Authority leading the overall oil spill response	Authority leading shoreline oil pollution response	Authority in charge of leading the wildlife response	Authority responsible for nature conservation and species conservation	Authority responsible for animal welfare and leading rehabilitation or euthanasia activities
Denmark	L	Central command for maritime emergency	Central command for maritime emergency	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency
	M	Central command for maritime emergency	Central command for maritime emergency	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency
	O	Central command for maritime emergency	Central command for maritime emergency	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency
	P	Central command for maritime emergency	Central command for maritime emergency	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency
	Q	Central command for maritime emergency	Central command for maritime emergency	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency
	R	Central command for maritime emergency	Central command for maritime emergency	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency (Ministry of environment)	Nature Agency
Estonia	E	Estonian Police and Border Guard Board	Estonian Rescue Board	Estonian Environmental Board (coordinating wildlife response)	Estonian Environmental Board	Estonian Veterinary and Food Board
	F	Estonian Police and Border Guard Board	Estonian Rescue Board	Estonian Environmental Board (coordinating wildlife response)	Estonian Environmental Board	Estonian Veterinary and Food Board
	G	Estonian Police and Border Guard Board	Estonian Rescue Board	Estonian Environmental Board (coordinating wildlife response)	Estonian Environmental Board	Estonian Veterinary and Food Board
	H	Estonian Police and Border Guard Board	Estonian Rescue Board	Estonian Environmental Board (coordinating wildlife response)	Estonian Environmental Board	Estonian Veterinary and Food Board
Finland	A	The Finnish Border Guard	Regional Rescue Services, municipalities	The Finnish Border Guard	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment (ELY), SYKE	Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI)
	B	The Finnish Border Guard	Regional Rescue Services, municipalities	The Finnish Border Guard	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment (ELY), SYKE	Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI)
	C	The Finnish Border Guard, Åland Provincial Government	Regional Rescue Services, municipalities, Åland Provincial Government	The Finnish Border Guard, Åland Provincial Government	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment (ELY), SYKE, Åland Provincial Government	Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI), Åland Provincial Government

	D	The Finnish Border Guard	Regional Rescue Services, municipalities	The Finnish Border Guard	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment (ELY), SYKE	Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI)
	E	The Finnish Border Guard, Åland Provincial Government	Regional Rescue Services, municipalities, Åland Provincial Government	The Finnish Border Guard, Åland Provincial Government	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment, SYKE, Åland Provincial Government	Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI), Åland Provincial Government
Germany	N	Central command for maritime emergency (CCME), Cuxhaven, 0049-30 / 185420-1400	Affected Administrative County district (<i>Vorpommern-Greifswald, Vorpommern-Rügen, City of Rostock, County of Rostock, North-west-Meckelenburg</i>)	Affected Administrative County district (<i>Vorpommern-Greifswald, Vorpommern-Rügen, City of Rostock, County of Rostock, North-west-Meckelenburg</i>)	Admin. County district's Regulatory agency and environment agency (Reporting to: Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment of The Ministry of Agruculture and the Environment of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Ref.410 & Ref.500)	Administrative County district Veterinarian (<i>Vorpommern-Greifswald, Vorpommern-Rügen, City of Rostock, County of Rostock, North-west-Meckelenburg</i>)
	O	CCME, Cuxhaven, 0049-30 / 185420-1400	Affected Administrative County district (<i>Vorpommern-Greifswald, Vorpommern-Rügen, City of Rostock, County of Rostock, North-west-Meckelenburg</i>)	Affected Administrative County district (<i>Vorpommern-Greifswald, Vorpommern-Rügen, City of Rostock, County of Rostock, North-west-Meckelenburg</i>)	Admin. County district's Regulatory agency and environment agency (Reporting to: Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment of The Ministry of Agruculture and the Environment of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Ref.410 & Ref.500)	Administrative County district Veterinarian (<i>Vorpommern-Greifswald, Vorpommern-Rügen, City of Rostock, County of Rostock, North-west-Meckelenburg</i>)
	P	CCME, Cuxhaven, 0049-30 / 185420-1400	LKN.SH, situation centre Husum, 0049-4841 / 8984-11	LKN.SH, situation centre Husum, 0049-4841 / 8984-11	Admin. County district's Regulatory agency and environment agency (Reporting to: Ministry of Energy, Agriculture, the Environment, Nature and Digitalization of the State of Schleswig Holstein Dept.43 & Dept.24)	Administrative County district Veterinarian (<i>Schleswig-Flensburg, City of Flensburg, Rendsburg-Eckernförde, City of Kiel, County of Plön, Eastern Holstein, City of Lübeck</i>) Rehabilitation Centre: Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V., 24376 Kappeln
Latvia	G	Latvian Coast Guard	State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia	State Environmental Service (coordinating wildlife response)		
	H	Latvian Coast Guard	State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia	State Environmental Service (coordinating wildlife response)		
	I	Latvian Coast Guard	State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia	State Environmental Service (coordinating wildlife response)		
Lithuania	I					
	J					

Poland	L	West Pomeranian Voivodeship Office in Szczecin, Maritime Office in Szczecin	West Pomeranian Voivodeship Office in Szczecin, Maritime Office in Szczecin, Vovoidship Inspectorate of Environmental Protection in Szczecin	Ministry of Climate / Ministry of Environment	General Directorate for Environmental Protection, Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Szczecin	Voivodeship Veterinary Inspectorate in Szczecin
	K	Pomeranian Voivodeship Office in Gdańsk, Maritime Office in Gdynia	Pomeranian Voivodeship Office in Gdańsk, Maritime Office in Gdynia, Vovoidship Inspectorate of Environmental Protection in Gdańsk	Ministry of Climate / Ministry of Environment	General Directorate for Environmental Protection, Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Gdańsk	Voivodeship Veterinary Inspectorate in Gdańsk
	N	West Pomeranian Voivodeship Office in Szczecin, Maritime Office in Szczecin	West Pomeranian Voivodeship Office in Szczecin, Maritime Office in Szczecin, Vovoidship Inspectorate of Environmental Protection in Szczecin	Ministry of Climate / Ministry of Environment	General Directorate for Environmental Protection, Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Szczecin	Voivodeship Veterinary Inspectorate in Szczecin
Russia	D					
	F					
	J					
	K					
Sweden	A					
	B					
	C					
	M					
	Q					
	R					

Annex 3 Scenario

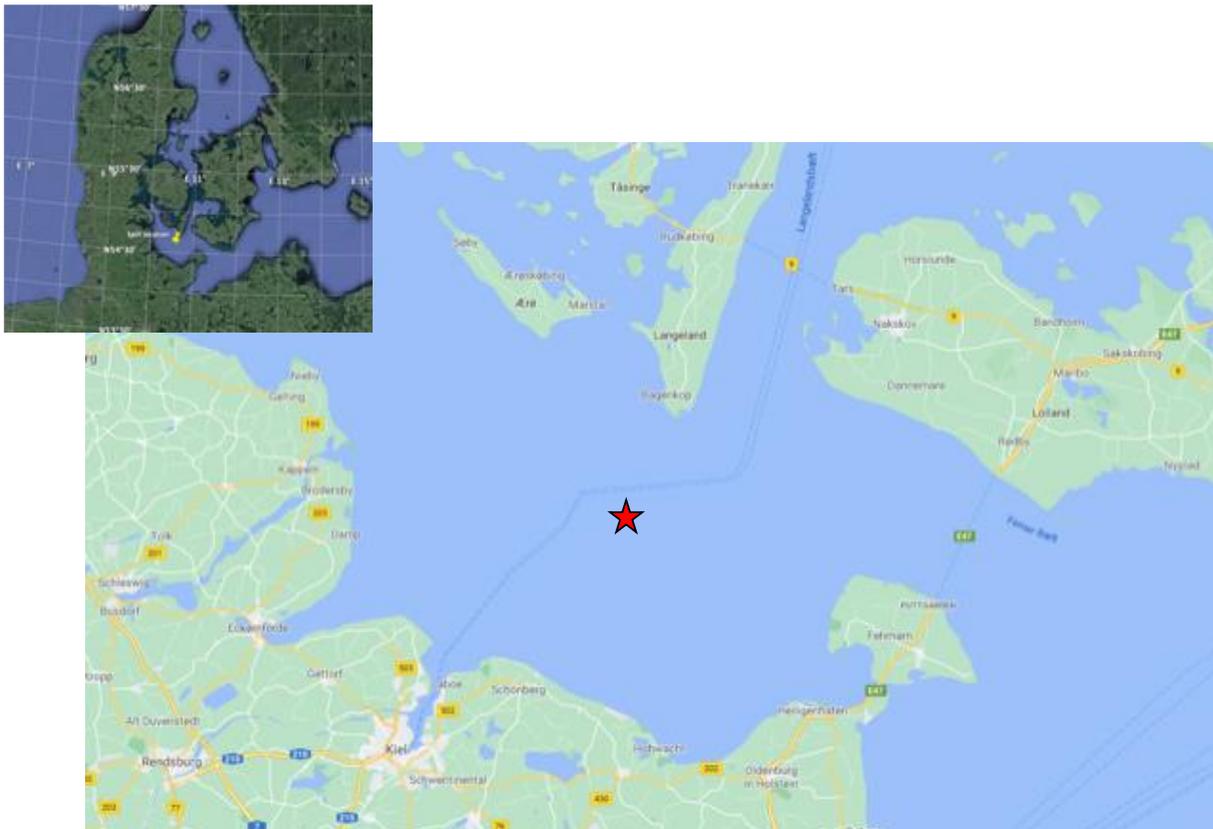
EXERCISE - EXERCISE -

Scenario and task

The scenario is situated in the western part of the Baltic Sea.

Description

Early in the morning of September 15th, 2020, a small oil tanker (named "Point Hope") collided with a bulk carrier ("Sisters of Mercy") south of Langeland and Ærø and northeast from Kiel (Coordinates: 54°34'55.50"N; 10°33'39.25"E)



The tanker vessel was damaged, and sank in Danish waters just outside the main shipping route and started releasing its cargo oil (500t IFO 180). The Danish coastguard was notified by the bulk carrier. There are no casualties.

The Danish authorities take immediate action and request assistance from German authorities for oil combat and spill response coordination.

It is decided to combat the pollution at the location, taking into consideration waves and current at the time. Priority is to prevent the spill entering the sensitive areas in this part of the Baltic Sea. Prevailing winds and currents cause a south-westward drift of oil. Weather conditions will change the coming days which are likely to take the oil in northern direction.

Aerial surveillance and guidance is provided by aircraft Denmark and Germany. Collected data will be transmitted to the national contact points and the (SOSC) on board the Danish counter pollution vessel onsite.

Oil combat strategy will aim to collect the oil before it reaches the shoreline. Shoreline protection is under discussion. Wildlife impacts (predominantly birds, possibly seals) can be expected on the German mainland in the next 24-48 hours. After 48 hours also wildlife impacts on Danish shorelines can be expected.

Exercise task

Danish and German authorities are tasked to contact each other and exchange their (joint) strategies, availability of resources and an information sharing structure in order to deal effectively with wildlife impacts.

Questions to participants

(affected member state/member states):

1. Please verify the reports on Oiled Wildlife (right/wrong, numbers of birds, exact location/coastal region)
 2. Please name the competent and responsible authority/authorities in your country for OWR (where appropriate different tasks of OWR, e.g. incident management, counting Oiled Birds)
 3. Please ensure the regular flow of information concerning the recent status of OWR (tell the management structure for OWR linked reporting channels in your country and/or draw a picture for it, show the international gateways with neighbouring country/-ies)
-
- Authorities involved in OWR (according to table xls):
 - Authority leading the overall oil spill response
 - Authority leading shoreline oil pollution response
 - Authority in charge of leading the wildlife response
 - Authority responsible for nature conservation and species conservation
 - Authority responsible for animal welfare and leading rehabilitation or euthanasia activities

Result of the exercise

Visualization of management structures for OWR linked reporting channels in different member states and demonstration of international gateways of neighbouring country/-ies for OWR