

Oil Spill Bird Protocol

Laurie Gibson
RI DEM
Division of Fish and Wildlife

Objectives

- Ensure organized, rapid, systematic response to lessen effects of spill on live birds and their habitats
- Ensure organized, rapid, systematic response to bird rescue and rehabilitation
- Ensure compliance to chain of custody for live and dead specimens
- Ensure organized, rapid, systematic response to affected habitat for NRDA
- Ensure organized, rapid, systematic response for data collection as relates to NRDA

Personnel

See spreadsheet

In accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the USFWS and DEM's Division of Fish and Wildlife are trustees of the wildlife resource. In the case of marine mammals, the NMFS is the designated trustee. However, in the event of an oil spill, of any magnitude, there is inadequate staffing to properly respond to such an event. While this protocol relies heavily on the participation of additional personnel, a formal MOU needs to be established prior to a spill event. Key to this protocol is the working relationship between the On Scene Coordinator and the various levels of federal, state, inter-state, RP's and NGO agencies.

Communication is essential in order to achieve the above stated objectives. Spill response does not conform to standard work weeks. Rapid establishment of a system either at the Command Center, Bird Center or other nearby location, to coordinate the dispatching of the field teams, bird retrieval and transport, shoreline assessments and reports from the general public and volunteers is critical. A dedicated set of phone numbers for volunteer sightings, as well as communication between all biological and damage assessment field crews is critical.

Unlike the other teams, the bird and marine mammal team must retrieve all live and dead creatures, to whatever extent possible and as quickly possible. This places an extremely large burden on the limited number of available teams. Coordination and assistance from other teams will greatly enhance this task.

Equipment

See spreadsheet

Methodology

Numerous protocols for the above objectives regarding spill response have been collected and reviewed. These existing protocols will enhance a successful response, reduce exposure for non-oiled birds and improve documentation for damage assessments. However, many complications can occur which may interfere with the implementation of these protocols.

In the early hours and days of a spill, it is difficult to organize key personnel, as they may not be available for mobilization. Communication is difficult to establish instantly. Weather may adversely affect the response. The sheer size of the spill may preempt any existing methodologies and limit adequate response and utilization of these protocols.

However, for the purpose of this protocol, the following established methodologies may be more than adequate in serving as a standard operating procedure, in part or total, for use in during a spill. While cumbersome in scope, responders need to be familiar with appropriate sections of the protocols in the area of their expertise. As this is a living document, reference will be made to the most current draft or edition:

NOAA Draft Guidelines for Birds and Mammals
Sections 9.1-9.10
NMFS Marine Mammal protocols
Tri-State Bird Rescue and Rehabilitation Guide
USFWS 4/02 Best Practice document

Forms –

Various agency use a number of forms, with many similarities. A consensus needs to be reached on which forms and the minimum number of fields to collect

For consideration

Form 1-Beach search form

NOAA 9.4 Beach Search Effort

Form 2- Individual Bird Form & corresponding tag(3 examples)

Seanet Beached Bird Survey Data Form

*USFWS Best Practices Appendix 6. Wildlife Field Reconnaissance
Forms, live & dead*

NOAA 9.5 Beach Census

Form 3-Summary Field Form

*NOAA 9.5 Beach Census modified to replace tag no w/ temp. ID
and live or dead field*

Form 4-Aerial Survey Form-are all these fields necessary?

NOAA 9.3 Bird Aerial Data Form

Form 5-Volunteer Hotline Responders Form

*Contains name of caller, ph. No., location of bird, if caller is present
to coord. Pick up*

Form 6-T & E breeding bird forms

USFWS/Tufts field sheets

Form 7_ Oiled Bird Intake Form

Tri-State Bird Rescue & Rehab

Form 8 Chain of Command

USFWS Chain of Custody

Budget

Personnel-	see spreadsheet		
	Supervisory	\$293.61	based on 7 hour day, w/o overtime
	Scientific	242.18	
	Development	215.31	
	Seasonal	80.78	
Equipment	see spreadsheet		
		\$6700+	