Who will assist the oiled wildlife?

Quick and effective action is essential to saving oiled wildlife during a spill. Once activated by OSPR, the OWCN rapidly mobilizes to rescue oiled wildlife during oil spills. The OWCN has trained professionals, veterinarians, and pre-trained volunteers that will direct search and recovery, transportation, and rehabilitation activities.

Only trained wildlife specialists will handle oiled wildlife. For the safety of both the public and the animals, the public is advised not to touch or approach oiled or otherwise injured wildlife. Dogs should also be kept away. If oiled animals are scared back into the water by pets or people, their chances of survival decrease dramatically. Your first instinct might be to pick them up, but by doing so you offer more harm than help.

If you see an oiled animal, report the animal(s) to the OWCN Response Hotline at 1-877-UCD-OWCN (823-6926), and provide the animal's location, time last seen, and your contact information.

Department of Fish & Wildlife's
Office of Spill Prevention & Response
Volunteer Hotline 1-800-228-4544
www.wildlife.ca.gov/OSPR

Follow us:

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Persons with disabilities needing reasonable accommodations or an alternate communication method can contact CDFW-OSPR at (916) 445-9326 or (800) 735-2929 (TTY/TDD).

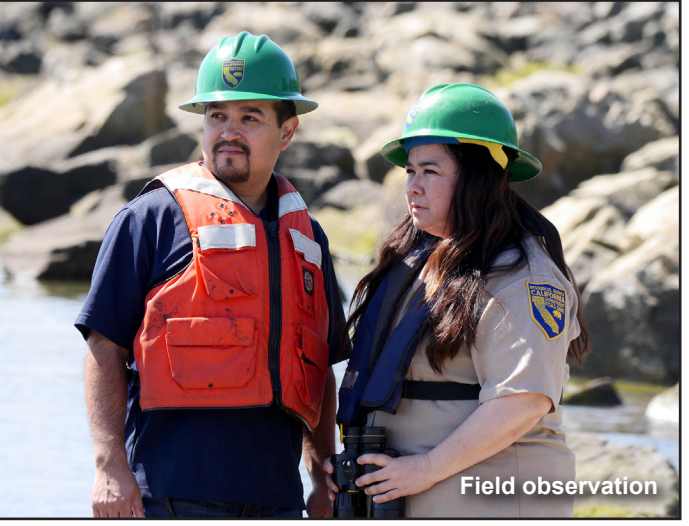
Incident specific information placed here.
Label 3.5x5 max.

During an incident, specific instructions for registration, reporting locations, and other information would be placed here.

Volunteers and Oil Spill Response

What You Need To Know and How You Can Help

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE


Field observation

What is a volunteer?

A volunteer can be pre-trained or come forward during a spill event with no prior oil spill experience. Each spill response is unique and the skills needed may be different each time.

Types of volunteers

- **Pre-trained** - Members of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN), Karen C. Drayer Wildlife Health Center, University of California (UC), Davis who have specialized training to care for oiled wildlife, or

- **Spontaneous** - Individuals who come forward to help with response efforts during oil spills.

Requirements

Volunteers need to be registered with the Office of Spill Prevention & Response (OSPR) or the appropriate emergency volunteer management program before participating in a spill response. Most oil spill volunteer opportunities require the following:

- Be at least 18 years old,
- Be in good physical and mental health,
- Be able to lift 25-35 pounds,
- Be able to communicate well in English (second language skills are a plus), and
- Attend required trainings (specific to each oil spill incident.)

How you can help?

Typically, volunteers will not be authorized to clean up oil due to the hazards associated with oil and the extensive training required. However, there are essential tasks that may require volunteer assistance such as:

- Be a field observer
- Transport oiled wildlife
- Pre-impact beach cleanup
- Support oiled animal care
- Perform light construction
- Clerical support and more…

Sign posting

Oil is Toxic – Safety First!

Oil is a toxic, hazardous material that can cause harm to people and animals. Some effects may only be short-term such as smelly fumes or oil on your skin. However, depending on the type of oil and how long it has been exposed to the environment, oils and fumes may contain toxic elements that may cause long-term harm years after exposure.
Play a key, critical role by keeping yourself, kids, and pets away from oiled areas, which minimizes the possibility of tracking oil into otherwise clean areas and scaring oiled wildlife back into the water.

Who is in charge of an oil spill response?

For marine oil spills, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) responds as the federal agency. For inland oil spills, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) responds as the federal agency. OSPR is the lead state agency for oil spills in waterways. Other federal, state, and local government agencies share information and contribute to decisions depending on the areas affected. By law, the responsible party (spiller) participates in the unified command, and is liable for oil spill cleanup and restoration costs.

Where will the oil go and how is it cleaned up?

Initial response usually focuses on stopping the oil leak, then on-water containment and recovery, with surface water cleanup. Getting oil off the water minimizes oiling and re-oiling of shores and banks.

Area Contingency Plans (ACPs) and Geographic Response Plans (GRPs) identify environmentally sensitive coastal sites and other areas of concern. OSPR works with the USCG on ACPs which cover the Port Areas for San Francisco, Los Angeles / Long Beach, and San Diego. OSPR works the US EPA on GRPs which are written for a specific area (for example a river or lake), and includes tactical response strategies tailored to a particular waterway at risk of injury from oil.

To learn more about ACPs and GPRs, go to www.wildlife.ca.gov/OSPR/Preparedness/ACP-Program-Overview.