

Abstract

Training Standards for Oiled Wildlife Responders

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Attempts to rehabilitate oiled wildlife have occurred after many large spills throughout the world since for the last half century. While early attempts were often unsuccessful, they must be recognized as the foundation which this profession was built on. Most of the current leaders in this field were trained or gained important experience on the job at spills such as the Cosco Busan, the Prestige, the Erika, the Treasure, the Sea Empress - back to the Exxon Valdez and even earlier spills. While organizations such as Tri-State Bird Rescue Research, the Oiled Wildlife Care Network, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Sea Alarm, International Bird Rescue Research Center and others have offered training to their own staff and volunteers, other non-governmental organizations and interested industry and government personnel, there is currently no comprehensive training program for oiled wildlife responders at all levels. The increasing expectation for professionalism in this field from the public, governmental regulators, colleagues in related scientific fields and ourselves demands that this change. This paper will attempt to propose a standardized training method for oiled wildlife responders that will ensure a high level of care, increased local, regional, and global capacity, and continued advancement of the art and science of oiled wildlife rehabilitation.