Abstract

Recovery and Rehabilitation of the Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) After an Oil Spill In The North Of Fohr (Germany)

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This study evaluates the results and methods used by three rehabilitation centres after a small-scale mystery oil spill on the 3rd February 2008. The spill occurred to the North of Germany around the islands of Amrum and Föhr and the species most affected was the Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*). The centres involved were the Tierhuis on the island of Föhr, the centre of Weidefeld, Kappeln, Germany and the centre of Fûgelpits, Moddergat, the Netherlands. The aim of the study was to report on the methods used at the centres during the rehabilitation of the Common Scoters and to determine if there were any differences. Necropsies were performed on 32 of the dead birds from Fûgelpits and these results along the description of the rehabilitation method was used to determine how significant an effect the rehabilitation centre has on the survival rate. Different methods were seen; the centres of Tierhuis and Weidefeld use a hands-on, intensive care approach to rehabilitation whereas the centre of Fûgelpits has a hands-off approach without much interference, to try to reduce stress. The results indicated that the method used by the centres gave significant differences. In total 397 birds were captured, 90 euthanized and after first stabilization 307 were transported to the 2 rehabilitation centres. One of these centres released 35 out of 62 birds (51%) and the other released 194 out of 239 birds (81%) and these results will be discussed along with the advantages and disadvantages to each of the methods used.