The Importance of Maintaining a Trained, Exercised and Experience Team of Wildlife Responders and Rehabilitators

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Components of an Effective Response Team

- Experience
- Knowledge of the field of oiled wildlife rehab & response
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Commitment
- Specialized training
- Regularly exercised skills
- Teamwork
- Imparting knowledge to others
Requirements of an Effective Response Team Member

- Commitment of time
  - During emergencies
  - Weekly, monthly exercising of skills in a wildlife rehab setting or other animal handling situations

- Proven ability to
  - work as part of a team
  - work effectively within an emergency response
  - Manage personal behaviors & stamina in an oil spill
  - Follow protocols and direction
  - Manage and train others

- Desire to improve, adapt & change as needed

- Understands the mission & goals of a response
An experienced & trained team results in

- Higher survival, release rates
- More efficient use of resources
  - Time
  - Money
  - expertise
- Greater personal satisfaction & performance by team members
- A reduction of compassion fatigue & unnecessary inter-personal politics
Having knowledge of all aspects of an oiled wildlife response helps each person & the team plan appropriately & be more effective. This includes an understanding of:

- oiled wildlife related politics
- typical fluctuations in the daily routine
- oiled wildlife rehabilitation protocols
- working in a crisis
Imparting Knowledge to Others
(insitu training)

- Training others is essential as it helps to expand & imbue the field of oiled wildlife response with more qualified people & makes each response more efficient.
- It is the responsibility of each team member to share their knowledge and expertise to meet this goal.
Adaptability & Flexibility

- Adapt to immediate changes in the plan for the sake of the greater good
- Adapt to different facilities, cultures, species, attitudes & modes of thought
- Adapt protocols in accordance with the situation. This only can be
- Flexibility in exercising protocols & daily work plans to fit the situation
Commitment & Sacrifice

- Oiled wildlife responders must be committed to
  - Expanding the field of knowledge
  - The ideals of wildlife rehabilitation
  - Working as part of a team
  - Getting out of their own way for the greater good of the effort
  - Maintaining an ethical and honest approach
  - Sacrifice personal time and daily comforts at short notice
Specialized Training

- Learning skills specific of oiled wildlife rehabilitation
Regularly Exercises Skills

This is achieved by volunteering weekly in a wildlife rehab program where the same or similar species of animals are cared for that may be present in an oil spill.
Teamwork

- Requires communication skills
- Again, adaptability
- Understanding of your role in the team
Requirements of IBRRC Response Team Members

- Attend quarterly field and rehabilitation training weekends in their first year & twice yearly after that
- Volunteer or work in a rehabilitation center or similar animal care situation for a minimum of 4 hrs. a week
- Encouraged to assist in animal crisis situations (botulism outbreaks, bird events) as they occur
- Encouraged to attend wildlife rehab conferences and trainings
- 24 hrs Hazwoper training required
Jessica Spill, Galapagos - adaptability

Treasure, South Africa - adapting protocols, teamwork
Examples

- Erika Spill, France - imparting information to others, regularly exercised skills

- Pemex Spill, Mexico - regularly exercised skills, adaptability
Mystery Spill, Argentina - all of the above

Rockness, Norway - knowledge of field, regularly exercised skills, commitment
Entitlement - no one is “entitled” to be part of an oil response team simply because they care about the environment or love animals.

Team members earn the right to be a part of a team through personal sacrifice and commitment to learning.

This means missing and leaving:
- loved ones
- birthdays
- family events
- births
- deaths
- jobs
- holidays, vacations
- your life!

Caring for oiled wildlife is a privilege, not a right!
Questions?