

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

*By Jay Holcomb  
International Bird Rescue Research Center*



# *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



I KNOW I CAME  
INTO THIS ROOM  
FOR A REASON

## *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



## *Knowledge of field*



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 fluxuations 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*

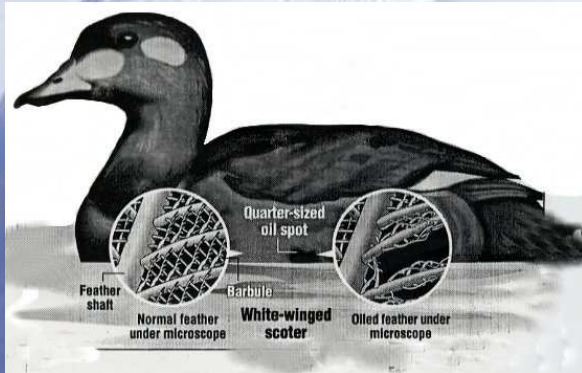


- ❖ Oiled wildlife responders must be committed to
  - ❖ Expanding the field of knowledge
  - ❖ The ideals of wildlife rehabilitation
  - ❖ Working as part of a team
  - ❖ Getting out of their own way for the greater good of the effort
  - ❖ Maintaining an ethical and honest approach
- ❖ sacrifice personal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



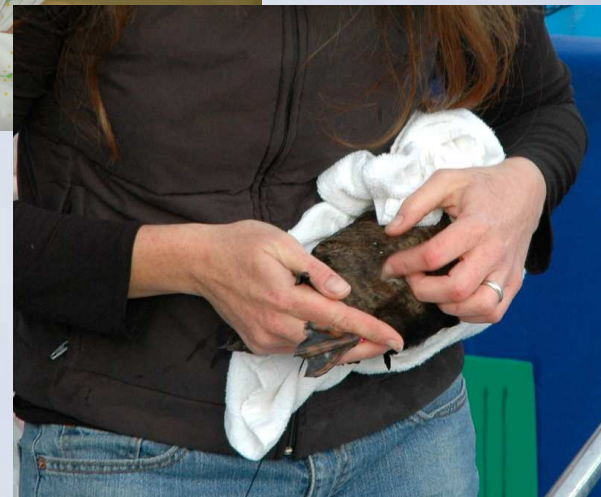
# *Specialized Training*

✧ 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.



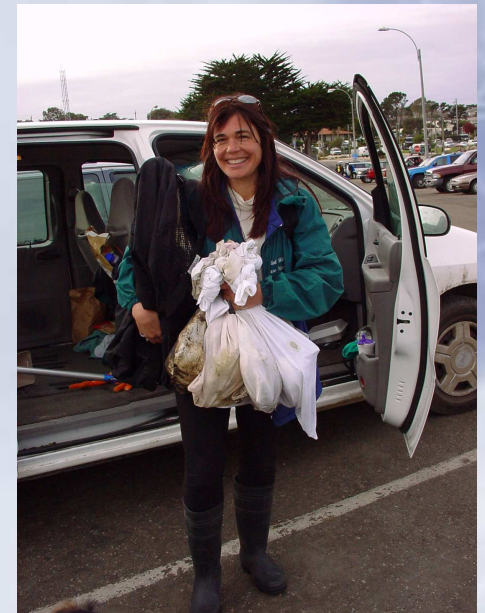
# Teamwork

- ✧ 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



*Examples*

✧ Treasure, South Africa - adapting protocols, teamwork

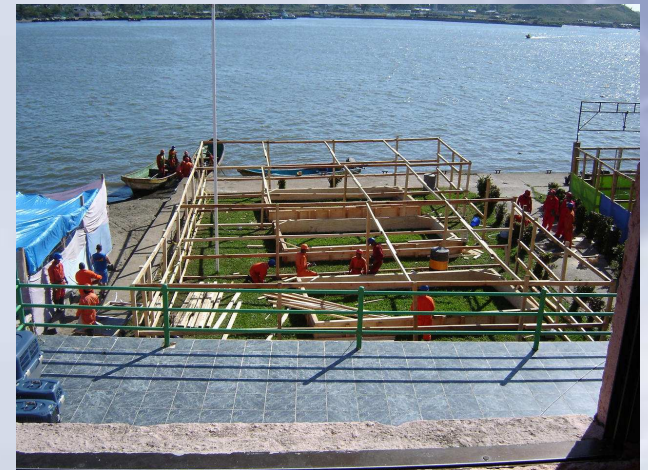


- ✧ Erika Spill, France - imparting information to others, regularly exercised skills

## *Examples*



- ✧ Pemex Spill, Mexico - regularly exercised skills, adaptability

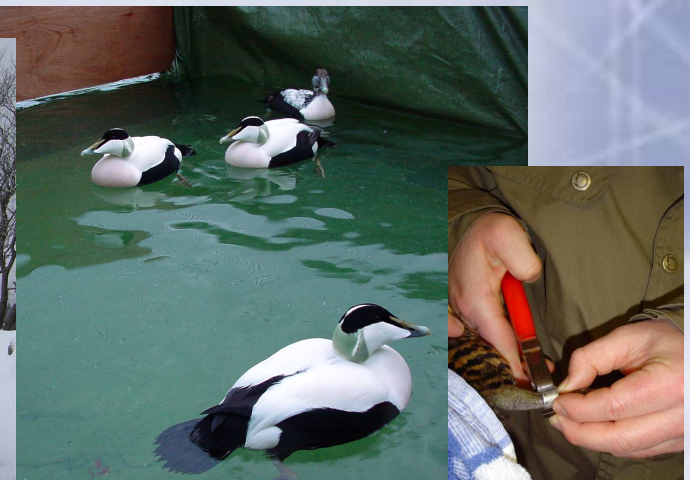


✧ Mystery Spill, Argentina - all of the above

*Examples*



✧ Rockness, Norway - knowledge of field, regularly exercised skills, commitment



# *Authors personal note*

*(from the soap box)*

✧ **Entitlement** - no one is "entitled" to be part of a oiled wildlife 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!



**I'M KIND OF A  
BIG DEAL.**



**LET'S TALK  
ABOUT HOW  
FABULOUS  
YOU THINK  
I AM**



# *Questions?*

