

Department of Environment and Resource Management
Conserving and managing Queensland's environment and natural resources

**Pacific Adventurer oil spill:
Big birds, sea snakes and a couple of turtles**
2009 Incident



Courtesy www.cargolaw

Mike Short 


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Incident Phases

- "Response" Phase
 - 11th March to 19th June 2009
(14 weeks, 2 Days)
- "Recovery" Phase
 - 20th June +
(Likely to be about 2 years)

Response Phase
When there is a threat to life, property and environment.
(Tactical response activities)

Recovery Phase
When the risks to persons, property and the environment have been mitigated.
Actions still required to return environments to pre-incident status.





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Oil


3 Sectors

- Sunshine Coast Beaches
- Bribie Island
- Moreton Island

<http://www.sunshinecoast-australia.com/media/images/100235.gif>



www.sunshinecoast-australia.com/.../100232.gif




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Sunshine Coast Beaches

- About 14 kilometres of coastline contaminated in total








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Bribie Island

- Northern half of east coast contaminated
- About 22 kilometres of coastline oiled








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Moreton Island

- About 39 kilometres of coastline oiled



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- Largely sandy beaches contaminated

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Oiled Wildlife Response

- Activation of the oiled wildlife response plan
- Mobilisation of equipment
 - Cairns (23 pallets)
 - Small regional kits
 - AMSA Brisbane Kit
- Mobilisation of personnel

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Caltex Warehouse Facility

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Housing – Dirty Birds

Big Birds

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Small Birds



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Washing/Rinsing Facilities



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Housing – Clean Birds



Big Birds



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Small Birds



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Pools – Waterproofing/Daily Swimming / Exercise



Categories of wildlife responded too

1. Avian Fauna
2. Sea snakes
3. Adult Turtles
4. Hatching Turtles



Avian Fauna

- Over 20,000 bird observations in areas adjacent to oil contamination (some days after incident)
 - Storm conditions kept most birds away from the coast
- Only about 100 birds were observed with oil contamination (0.5%)
- Most contamination was limited to the legs and feet



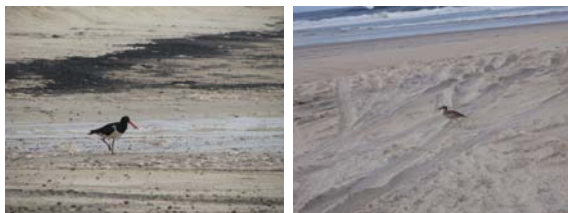
- 18 heavily oiled birds were taken into captive care
 - 13 Australian Pelicans
 - 1 Sacred Kingfisher
 - 1 Lesser Crested Tern
 - 1 Wedge Tailed Shearwater
 - 2 Silver Gulls
 - Released without authority by care group
- All intakes within the first 4 weeks
 - Most beaches cleaned quickly
 - Lots of oil buried



Capture



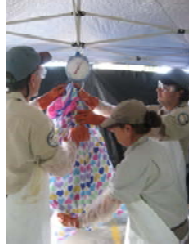
Monitoring



Intake – Assessment & Triage



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Hydration



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Nutritional requirements - primary



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Nutritional requirements - secondary



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Medication – Sporonox + Sea Tabs



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Stabilisation – Pre Wash



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Washing



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Rinsing



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Drying



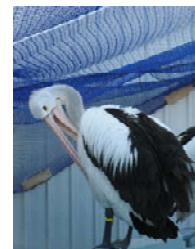
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Stabilisation – Post Wash Care



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Waterproofing



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Waterproof testing



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Final Assessment



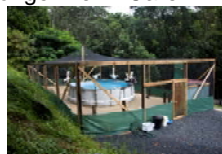
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Transport to Longer Term Care



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Longer Term Care



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Release

- 17/18 Birds released
 - 16 of the 17 that were rehabilitated fully were released
 - Wedge Tailed Shearwater died due to neurological complications
 - No association with oil contamination or captive care issues
 - 2 birds were taken from QPW and washed under a tap and released
 - Prognosis unknown
- 1 additional oiled Pelican was taken into care by a private care group
 - fate unknown



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Crested Tern and Sacred Kingfisher release



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Pelican Release – Transport from long term care centre to boat ramp



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Transport to Moreton Island by vessel for release



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Sea Snakes (3)

1. 1 Oiled dead on beach



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2. 1 Oiled alive then died in care soon after washing
 - External group managed



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3. 1 Oiled alive – Released successfully after washing
 - External group with good technical support



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Adult Turtles (2)

1. 1 Green Turtle oiled and alive
2. 1 Green Turtle oiled dead on beach

- Both animals stranded on beach as a result of other health matters
 - Oil secondary due to stranding event
- Numerous strandings occurred (normal) to the area during response
- All strandings checked for oil impacts/associations for a period of 6 weeks after beaches were classified as clean = 0



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Live oiled turtle



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Juvenile Turtles

- 22 Nests immediately adjacent to oil contamination zones on Sunshine Coast beaches were identified



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- Nests were caged to trap hatchlings to restrict their access to oiled environment



Similar design of nest trap systems



- Nests checked regularly



- As nests hatched then juveniles transferred to clean (oil free) beaches for release



Oiled Wildlife Response Costs

- Cost for wildlife \$AUD10,300/Bird (\$US 8,900)
 - This includes all labour costs including construction
 - Costs of consumable items
 - Does not include capital expenditure
- Costs turtles and sea snakes - Unknown
 - Supported by Australia Zoo and Sea World providing in kind support
- 70 Kilometres of coastline contaminated at a total cost of \$AUD 34 million = \$AUD4800 for every linear meter
- Wildlife costs excluding capital items represent 0.485% of the total response costs

Oil Spill Recommendation

- 1.5 Weeks out from State election
 - Highly recommend delaying spills under these circumstances



www.abc.net.au/health/2007/09/17/5817_58886.jpg