



"Up here in the North vessels should keep a sharp lookout for the latest oil slick drifting in a South-Easterly direction, whilst vessels further South ..."

What to do with Your Oil Pollution

The British Nature Conservancy Council have produced an 'Oil Pollution Manual' for use by nature conservation and animal welfare organizations during oil or other pollution and animal mortality incidents. It sets out most of the relevant considerations and authorities, and concludes with appendices showing an appallingly complicated diagram of interlocking and overlapping responsibilities, setting out the relevant legal provisions and voluntary agreements, reviewing the treatment of oiled birds, and listing NCC regional staff. It will be interesting to discover how well all these arrangements work. A short popular leaflet is also being produced dealing with the treatment of polluted wildlife. They are obtainable from the NCC Great Britain Headquarters, 19/20 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PY.

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Consistency and the RSPB

Birds, magazine of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, winter 1977, 6(9) p. 7: "confrontation is a last resort in the tactics of the Society. Usually it is in the interests of the birds to consult and compromise rather than oppose full-bloodedly ... our realistic attitude towards North Sea oil development has resulted in better planning and the acceptance of the need for safeguards from the operators ...".

And on p. 9, with regard to the development of the Beatrice oilfield: "It might also be asked why the Mesa group were ever granted a licence to explore for oil in this sensitive area ... the Society has opposed the

development of the oilfield in principle and will continue to press this matter at the highest level." (The Society does not actually appear to have questioned the original grant of a license for exploration, nor do they say who should compensate Mesa for their time and expense if permission to proceed with the exploitation of their discovery is refused.)

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Oil Monitoring Development

A monitoring instrument which, if adopted by the world tanker fleet, could reduce the discharge of oil into the seas by more than 80%, is now being marketed by the United Kingdom company Babcock Controls of Croydon. The device is the first de-ballasting monitor to provide a direct digital readout of the amount of oil discharged per mile, and it will, claim the makers, make it easier to avoid the danger of breaking the international oil deballasting limit which is currently 60 litres of oil per mile.

Instruments normally used at present give only the oil in water content. The new Babcock monitoring instrument gives an early warning for shutting down the discharge system if the limit is being exceeded.

The annual international discharge of oil from tankers is now about 1.6m tonnes annually but Babcock Controls say that if proper instrumentation methods were used this figure could be cut to 0.3m tonnes.

Ozone

A joint report published by Britain, the United States and France has recommended that further research is needed to quantify the damage to the ozone layer caused by aerosol propellants and certain fertilizers. However the report described the effects of supersonic air flights on the ozone layer as 'negligible', stating that a fleet of up to 35 Concorde aircraft would account for a small fraction of 1% of ozone destruction.

Meanwhile, the US Food and Drug Administration has compelled manufacturers of aerosol hairspray, deodorant or anti-perspirant that use chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) gases as a propellant to carry the health warning that it "may harm public health and the environment by reducing ozone in the upper atmosphere". This public health warning is the beginning of a programme adopted by the American agencies to ban CFC aerosols from interstate commerce by April 1979.

Removing Minamata Mercury

A ten year programme has been launched to remove poisonous mercury deposits from Minamata Bay in southern Japan. 'Minamata disease' caused by the dumping of mercury contaminated industrial wastes in the bay first came to public attention in 1956. Children who ate fish caught in the area suffered paralysis and subsequently more than 200 people died from mercury poisoning. The clean-up project is expected to cost \$42m.