

A collaborative approach to bridging the wildlife response preparedness gap: How OSRL and its wildlife response partners are working together to support and promote wildlife response preparedness within the oil industry.

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In 2019, key oil industry and non-governmental stakeholders came together in an Ipieca-funded workshop in Cyprus to explore how the oil industry could better implement wildlife response preparedness good practice. During this workshop, a new wildlife response preparedness wheel concept was also endorsed as a guide to developing and maintaining preparedness over time through progressive steps that should be repeated cyclically.

Since then, OSRL has been working with its members and wildlife response partners – Sea Alarm, GOWRS (Global Oiled Wildlife Response System), and its 10 organisational members– to further the adoption and implementation of the steps depicted in the wildlife preparedness wheel. OSRL has actively sought to define and formalise its approach to promoting wildlife response preparedness as part of its preparedness services to its members, with a focus on actively collaborating with leading wildlife response organisations, integrating wildlife response planning into overall oil spill preparedness plans, and prioritising good practice and wildlife welfare over self-interest.

The wildlife response preparedness wheel concept introduced during the 2019 workshop serves as a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement in wildlife response preparedness. This concept emphasizes a cyclical process, ensuring that preparedness measures are not static but evolve over time. By following the steps outlined in the wheel, organisations can systematically enhance their readiness to respond to wildlife emergencies associated with oil spills.

OSRL's commitment to this framework is evident in its proactive efforts to engage with various stakeholders. By collaborating with Sea Alarm, GOWRS, and other partners, OSRL has been able to leverage a wealth of expertise and resources. This collaborative approach has facilitated the development of robust wildlife response plans that are integrated into broader oil spill preparedness strategies. The integration of wildlife response planning into overall preparedness plans ensures that wildlife considerations are not an afterthought but a fundamental component of spill response efforts.

One of the key aspects of OSRL's approach is its emphasis on good practice and wildlife protection and welfare. By prioritising these principles, OSRL sets a positive example for the industry. This commitment to ethical practices is reflected in the organisation's efforts to promote the adoption of the wildlife preparedness wheel among its members. Through training, workshops, and ongoing support, OSRL and our key partners helps our members understand and implement the steps necessary for effective wildlife response preparedness.

This paper will provide an overview of these collaborative efforts to date and utilise case studies to provide real-world examples of how this has worked in practice. The authors will also share any lessons learned to date that may be of relevance to the wider oil spill preparedness and response community. These case studies will highlight the practical application of the wildlife preparedness wheel and demonstrate the tangible benefits of a collaborative approach to wildlife response preparedness.

OSRL's approach exemplifies responsible industry practices that benefit both wildlife and the environment. Their commitment to collaboration and wildlife protection sets a positive example for the industry. By working together with leading wildlife response organisations and integrating wildlife response planning into overall preparedness strategies, OSRL ensures that wildlife considerations are at the forefront of oil spill response efforts. This collaborative and ethical approach not only enhances the effectiveness of wildlife response but also contributes to the overall goal of environmental protection and sustainability.

In conclusion, the efforts of OSRL and its partners in promoting wildlife response preparedness through the wildlife preparedness wheel concept represent a significant advancement in the field. By continuously improving preparedness measures and prioritising wildlife welfare, OSRL demonstrates a commitment to responsible industry practices. This paper will provide valuable insights into these efforts and offer practical guidance for other organisations seeking to enhance their wildlife response preparedness.