

Oiled Birds

National Park Agency,
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Oiled Birds in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea in February 2004

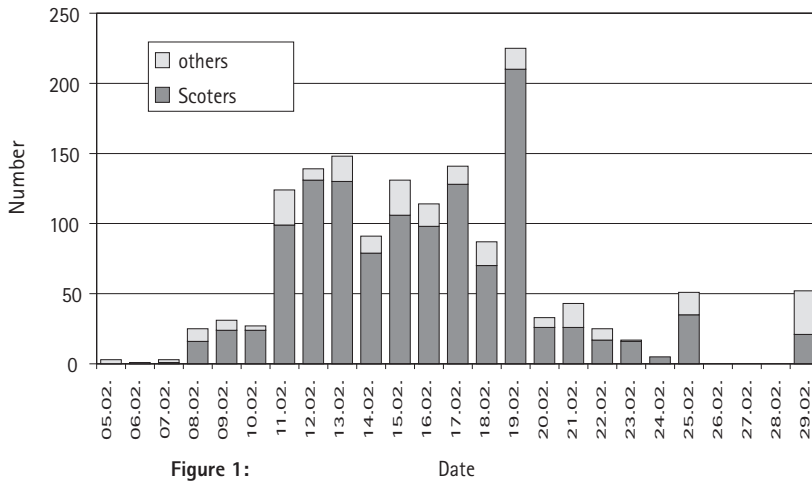


Figure 1:
Number of oiled birds found dead at the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea, mainly Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*).

Distribution of Oiled Birds in February 2004

Between 05.02. and 23.02.2004 about 1,500 oiled birds were found dead on the coast in the Schleswig-Holstein part of the Wadden Sea. About 83% of the registered oil victims were Scoters (*Melanitta nigra*). Mainly all birds were found in the North Frisian region, especially on the islands, mainly Amrum and the Halligen. These sea ducks normally stay in high numbers (50,000-70,000) in this area seawards the islands and the Halligen on the open sea during winter time. There was no oil pollution directly on the beaches and coasts of the concerned area.

In the Danish area near Esbjerg and Skallingen, only single oiled birds were registered during that time.

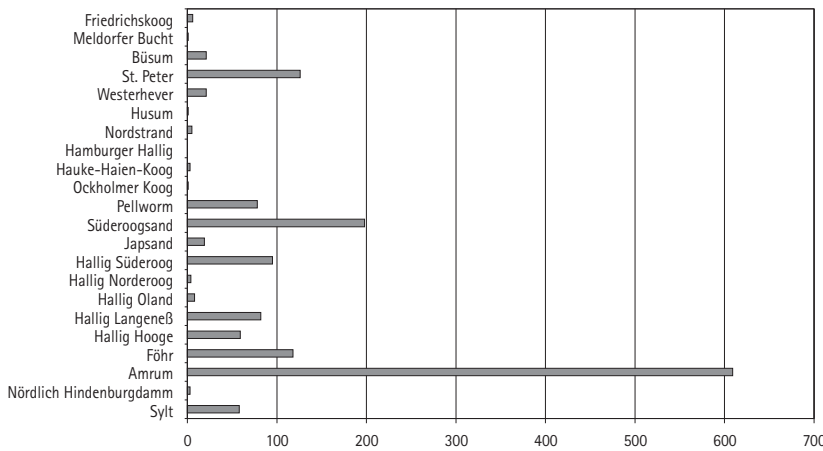
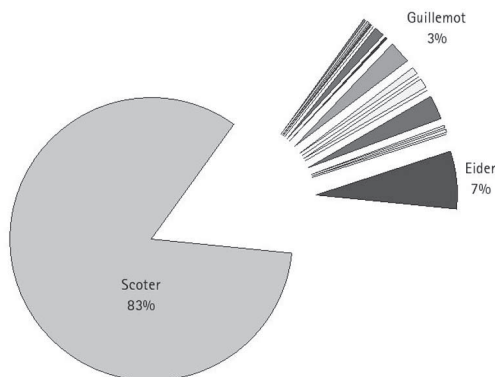


Figure 2:
Number of oiled birds found dead at the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea between 5 – 29 February 2004.

Figure 3:
Species distribution of oiled birds found dead at the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea coast between 5 – 29 February 2004.



Cause of the Oil

Aerial surveys were carried out on behalf of the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies in Cuxhaven several times in February, however, there were no findings with regard to the oiled birds washed ashore the Schleswig-Holstein coast.

According to the oil analysis of oiled feathers, it has to be stated that two different responsible ships were involved in this case. One ship must have discharged in the open sea, the other one closer to shore. Because of the first one, high sea species, such as Gunnet, Razorbil, Guillemot and Kittiwake were involved, in the near-shore area mainly scoters were affected.

In both cases, it was heavy fuel oil from the Russian-Baltic area.