

Discussion

The fact that the financial claim of the Netherlands Society for the Protection of Birds (Vogelbescherming) on behalf of rehabilitation centres was admissible was considered interesting; it shows that oil spills cause damage not only in economic terms (CJC). It is hoped that in future incidents, Vogelbescherming can collaborate with Beached Bird Survey (BBS) organizers in these matters. Oil samples, as collected from beaches and beached birds can be used as evidence (HP).

There is need for better coordination in case of oil incidents; the best and easiest solution being to use the telephone (MFL). Many people are involved, the bigger the problem the more people (AB). The main reason for emergency plans, as exemplified by HZ is to get oiled seabirds in licenced rehabilitation centres. Many people, especially dog owners seem to go to the beach if anything happens. A new regulation is in preparation to forbid dogs, horses and 4WD-cars on the beach. The problems during oil incidents seem typically Dutch (HB). MH replies that the situation in Shetland is different. A small human population and inaccessible beaches makes life easy. Birds are taken to rehabilitation centres in Scotland (Five) if there are too many victims. In England, during oil incidents it is tried to cooperate with local authorities (LC). Immediate figures are given to the press, no corpses go astray. In Denmark, the public refrains. Civil Defense collects beached birds, while hunters are hired to kill birds that can not be grasped (JD). In Germany, there is hardly anything organized in case of an incident, a 'civil war' comparable to the Dutch example might break out (CA).

The Bird hospitals are good in cleaning oiled birds, but more people should be trained. If birds are in a poor condition it is better to kill them although the German law forbids this. AB remarks that it is also prohibited in the Netherlands to kill a beached bird and one also needs a license to just carry a bird. All 150 Rehabilitation Centres are licensed, 14 of those are specialized in seabirds.

The registration of incidents, the counting and identification of corpses, is not very well organized with these plans. In fact, the plan frustrates routine BBS seriously, and as a result BBS organizers do not cooperate to get emergency plans entering into force (CJC). A meeting, to organize counts, sampling, and dissection of corpses will be convened by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries (AB). There were some complaints about the sampling of birds during several oil incidents in the past for scientific examinations on NIOZ (AB). No reports had been published. CJC remarked that this was the main reason for setting up a dissection programme by the working group Beached Bird Surveys since 1982, but that cooperation would definitely be preferable. There are, however, some differences in what sort of data are derived and wanted from dissections. MFL promises that NIOZ reports about dissections will follow in due course. Agreement is reached to cooperate in future (CJC, MFL). The clean up of spoiled beaches is commenced as soon as possible after the event of a calamity (TK). Waiting for the birds to be counted first is quite impossible, because the beaches are well visited in this crowded country. After the cleaning, corpses are sent to the incineration. It is suggested to have a phonecall first to NZG/NSO, in order to inform about the incident and clean up operations and to allow samples to be taken from stretches which are not immediately being cleaned. In return, NZG/NSO will inform governmental bodies about mass strandings (CJC).

Abbreviations: CA C.Averbeck, HB H.Baptist, AB A.Binsbergen, LC L.Campbell, CJC C.J. Camphuysen, JD J.Durinck, MH M.Heubeck, TK T. Kramer, MFL M.F.Leopold, HP H.Peeters, HZ H.Zandstra.