

INTRODUCTION

In the event of an oil spill in the Great Barrier Reef Region it is most likely that seabird populations would be subject to significant impact. Rescue, cleaning and rehabilitation of oiled birds would form a major, high profile part of the response effort and would provide a useful activity for the multitude of concerned volunteers that would materialise in the event of a spill. There is currently no detailed plan for coordinating oiled bird cleaning and rehabilitation in the Great Barrier Reef Region. There is a pressing need to develop such a plan.

The effectiveness and success rate of oiled bird cleaning and rehabilitation may be subject to question and there is a need to identify ways in which it can be improved. Research is needed in this area.

It is therefore hoped that this workshop will initiate coordinated action by government, industry and environmental groups towards developing an oiled bird contingency plan for the Reef Region, and identify areas in which further research is needed.

OBJECTIVES

1. Review and summarise existing information, capabilities and techniques regarding oiled bird cleaning and rehabilitation.
2. Achieve agreement on the value of oiled bird cleaning and rehabilitation.
3. Initiate development of a detailed contingency plan for oiled bird rescue, cleaning and rehabilitation in the Great Barrier Reef Region which:
 - Identifies the various agencies and groups that would be involved, defining their responsibilities and roles and providing a clear organisational framework.
 - Provides for regular training exercises/workshops for these agencies and groups.
 - Identifies the resources required and establishes a network of these resources and procedures for their use.
 - Details a monitoring program to assess the effectiveness and success rate of the effort should a spill occur.
4. Identify and prioritise research needs with regard to oiled bird cleaning and rehabilitation.