

Turtles and the Oiled Wildlife Response in Western Australia: A Collaboration between Industry and Government

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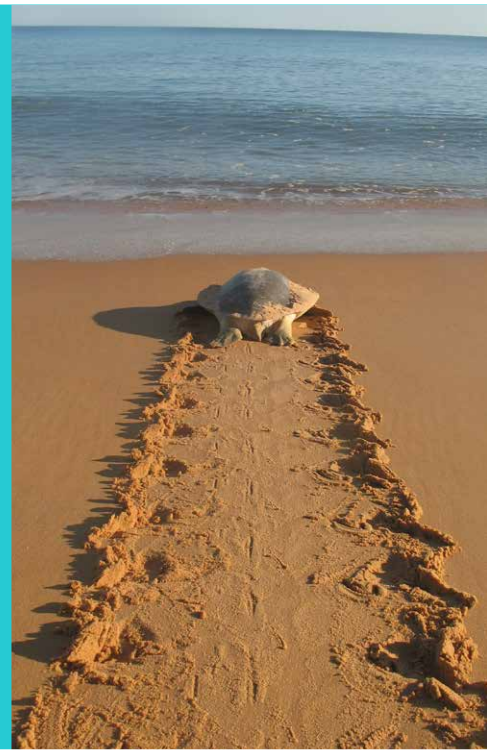
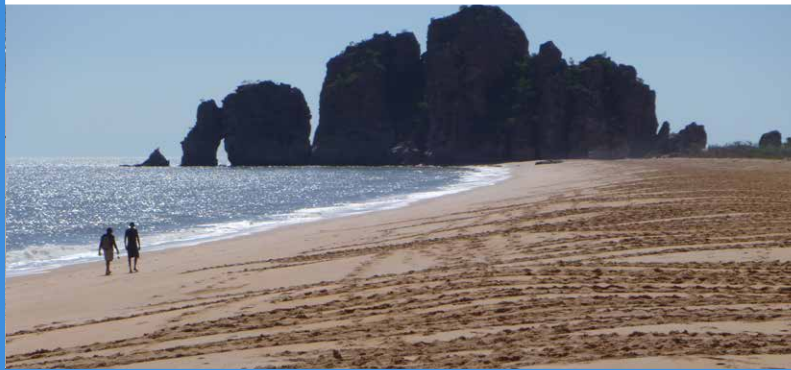
Increasing shipping activity in addition to an increase in exploration and development of oil and gas resources in the waters off Western Australia has resulted in an unprecedented risk of a significant oil spill in WA. The resulting threat to wildlife from such an incident has the potential of being catastrophic depending on the area to be affected and the response to the spill. In response to this increasing risk the Department of Parks and Wildlife have begun working with the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre, representing industry groups, to develop a collaborative approach to oiled wildlife response irrespective of the source of a spill. Through the development of a Statewide strategic plan and seven regional plans this collaborative approach is ensuring a standardised response to these low frequency yet high consequence incidents which have the potential to require enormous resourcing in a response.

The Statewide and regional response plans along with other lower level documents (e.g. standard operating procedures) provide

guidance for preparation and planning in addition to activation of a response to an oiled wildlife incident. The State plan provides information on requirements for a response irrespective of the location within WA including personnel and equipment requirements, communication protocols and standard operating procedures. The regional plans provide the regional context to the state plan including the additional practical detail needed to activate a response at a known location. These plans provide guidance in the activation of a response without being overly prescriptive while empowering the responders to direct their efforts as deemed appropriate.

Our preparation for an oil spill event is crucial to ensure the greatest environmental success in any response. This industry/government collaborative approach will guide the oiled wildlife response whatever the source of the spill and ensure the maintenance of a standard across these events which will enable the greatest likelihood of success.

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