

POLLUTION INCIDENTS

MARINE INCIDENT REPORTING (MIR) SYSTEM

Accurate statistical data required for spill response strategic planning provides a valuable resource to assist in responding to an increasing number of queries from the media, interest groups and the general public. It also provides valuable input to Government projects such as the State of the Marine Environment Report and a measure of the effectiveness of the pollution prevention measures being progressively implemented. These statistics will be of value in the ongoing National Plan Review assessment of current and projected risks.

AMSA uses the following definitions in maintaining the database:

‘Oil discharges’ refers to any discharges or suspected operational discharges of oil from (a) vessel(s) in excess of the permitted discharge rate under MARPOL 73/78 (generally 15 parts per million oil in water).

‘Oil spills’ refers to accidental spills resulting from incidents such as groundings or collisions as well as spills during bunkering resulting from overflow of tanks, burst hoses, etc.

AMSA’s MIR system currently contains over 5400 records. Information is entered from the following sources:

- Oil discharge reports received through AMSA’s Search and Rescue Centre (AusSAR), which includes reports from aircraft (Coastwatch, RAAF and civil) as well as from vessels at sea.
- Records of National Plan expenditure in responding to oil spills.
- Incident reports submitted by State/NT authorities.
- Other sources (eg Department of Industry, Science & Resources, industry).

At least 25 per cent of the reports received by AMSA are ultimately not entered onto the database. Reasons for not entering a reported pollution sighting include where the sighting is or is strongly suspected to be one of the following:

- land sourced, including tank farms, road tanker accidents, drains or road runoff after heavy rain

(unless some response activity is required and/or National Plan response costs are incurred); or

- coral spawn or other marine algae or similar occurrence, taking into account the location of the report and the time of the year; or
- discoloured water with no sheen; or
- washings of coal dust from bulk carriers which have departed from a coal port; or
- discharge from a sewage outfall.

Reports of maritime incidents where there is no reported pollution are not entered unless there are preventative measures taken by a National Plan authority, which incur costs.

The completeness of the information included in this database cannot be guaranteed, as only those incidents reported to AMSA are included. AMSA does, however, make every effort to ensure the data is as complete as possible.

OIL POLLUTION STATISTICS FOR 2000–2001

There were 335 oil discharge sightings and oil spills reported during 2000–2001. National Plan resources were involved in seven responses to oil spill incidents.

Figure 2 shows a break up of sources of reported oil spills during 2000–2001.

Around 87% of reported oil spills during the period occurred in port and coastal areas.

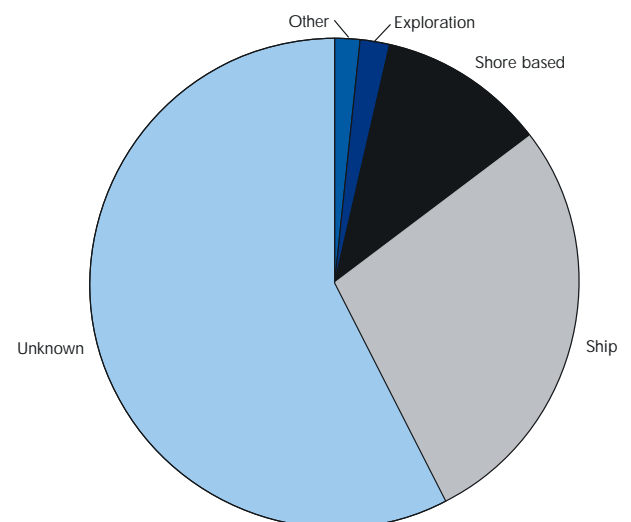


Figure 2 - Reported Oil Spills during 2000–2001

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OIL POLLUTION SOURCES

Figure 3 indicates the types of vessels from which discharges were reported during 2000–2001. Where a vessel type is not identified, this generally means that a vessel has been seen from the air and cannot be classified.

The sources of 193 sightings during the period were not identified, although the majority are assumed to be ship-sourced.

INCIDENTS IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS 2000–2001

***Bunga Teratai Satu* - 2 November 2000**

The container ship, *Bunga Teratai Satu*, ran aground Sudbury Reef near Cairns on 2 November. The National Plan was activated for preventative measures. Further details of the incident are covered in the Queensland State report on page 18.

***Pratidina 05, Turu Cay* - 17 November 2000**

The *Pratidina 05*, a 30 metre Indonesian fishing vessel, was found by a Coastwatch surveillance flight grounded on Turu Cay on 17 November 2000. Turu Cay is located in the Arafura Sea about 40 nautical miles (nm) south of Irian Jaya and approximately 65 nm to the north west of Thursday Island.



Indonesian fishing vessel Pratidina 05 aground on Turu Cay

It had drifted 55 nm from Numar Reef where the vessel had been involved in a previous maritime search and rescue incident. The crew of ten had been removed at Numar Reef and taken to Thursday Island.

AMSA personnel inspected the vessel on Turu Cay on 19 November and estimated that the vessel was carrying about 12 tonnes of fuel. There was no evidence of any pollution but there had been damage to the vessel's hull. In the absence of action by the vessel's Korean owners, AMSA arranged for a contractor to remove the fuel.

After numerous requests to the owners to remove the *Pratadina 05*, arrangements were made to remove and scuttle the vessel in Australian waters at a site determined by Environment Australia. However due to the condition of the vessel and the weather, the *Pratadina 05* sunk 150 metres from Turu Cay's reef edge on 10 February 2001.

***Devprayag, Portland, VIC* - 22 April 2001**

On 22 April 2001, the Indian registered bulk carrier, *Devprayag* ran aground on Minerva Reef near Portland, Victoria.

The vessel was anchored off shore after delivering a cargo to Portland when it dragged anchor and went aground in strong winds.

The Marine Board of Victoria has the legislative responsibility for vessel safety and marine pollution response in Victorian waters. Once notified of the accident, the Marine Board worked closely with the Shipping Corporation of India and United Salvage to ensure the vessel was safely refloated.

Divers were used to check the ship's hull for any potential damage that could cause pollution.

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Pollution control crews and equipment were also on standby to ensure any potential oil leaks would be quickly contained.

The vessel was refloated on 25 April and continued on to Geelong to load a cargo of grain.

Sericata, Geelong VIC - 23 May 2001, Brisbane QLD - 30 June 2001

On 23 May 2001, the tanker *Sericata*, when alongside the Shell refinery berth in Geelong spilled an estimated 2500 litres of crude oil while draining a manifold during the final stages of a discharge operation. Most of the oil was contained

on deck but an estimated 200 - 500 litres were lost overboard into Corio Bay.

The tanker was also involved in an incident on 30 June 2001 in Brisbane. The Master reported that he had lost 20 litres of crude oil whilst alongside the Caltex refinery berth. The cause was thought to be from a possible leak in the vessel's inert gas seal overboard line.

A Marco skimmer was mobilised by the Port of Brisbane to recover the oil. Port of Brisbane advised that they recovered between 800 - 1000 litres of Vung Tau crude with very little water content.

Figure 3
Discharge Sources
by Vessel Type

