POLLUTION INCIDENTS

MARINE INCIDENT REPORTING 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 for risk assessment and 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.

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 marine incident reporting system currently contains over 6000 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 civilian) 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, Tourism & Resources, industry, the general public).

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).
- Coral spawn or marine algae or similar occurrence, taking into account the location of the report and the time of the year.
- Discoloured water with no sheen.
- Washings of coal dust from bulk carriers.
- 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 2001-2002

There were 345 oil discharge sightings and oil spills reported during 2001-2002. National Plan resources were involved in nine responses to oil spill incidents.

Figure 1 shows a break up of sources of reported oil spills during 2001-2002.

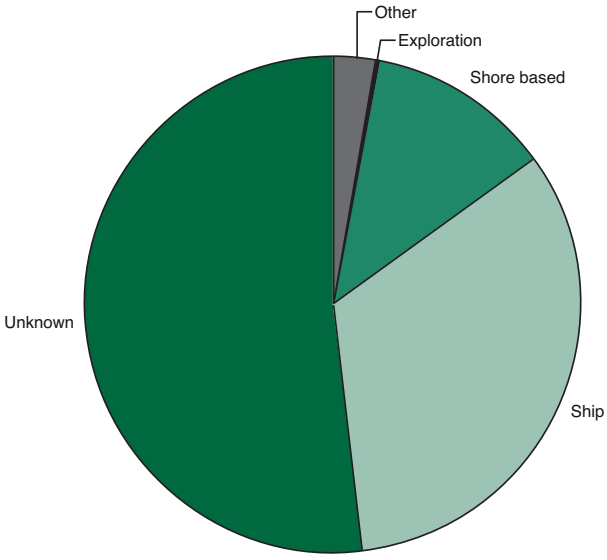


Figure 1 - Reported Oil Spills during 2001-2002

POLLUTION INCIDENTS

OIL POLLUTION SOURCES

Figure 2 indicates the types of vessels from which discharges were reported during 2001-2002. Where a vessel type is not classified, this generally means that a vessel has been seen from the air but could not be identified.

The source of 180 sightings during the period were not identified, although the majority are assumed to be ship-sourced.

INCIDENTS IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS 2001-2002

Phillip Island and Cape Otway - 12 December 2001

On 12 December a report was received of oil in the water off the beach between Summerland and Smiths Beach. A check was made of shipping in the area and arrangements put in place to take samples from ships known to be in the vicinity. Another report was received later in the day of a further spill at Moonlight Head, west of Cape Otway. Subsequent sampling of oil from both the Phillip Island and Cape Otway locations revealed the oil had originated from the same source. By this time a significant number of oiled birds had been reported. AMSA subsequently identified seventeen ships that were known to be in the vicinity. The Oil Spill Trajectory Model was used to "hind cast" the source of the spill. Samples have been obtained from the ships and investigations are continuing to find the responsible vessel.

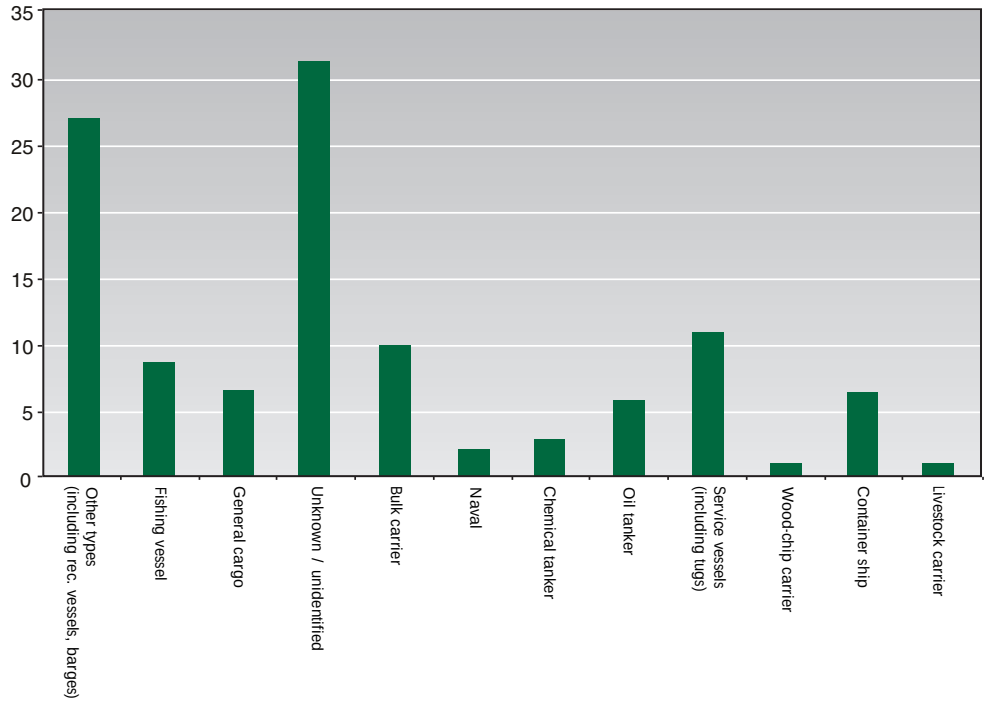
Details of further incidents in Australian waters are covered in the State and Northern Territory Activity reports.

Overseas Response - *Jody F Millennium*, Gisborne, New Zealand

The log carrier, *Jody F Millennium*, grounded off the port of Gisborne on 6 February 2002 in heavy seas. At the time of the grounding, the vessel had onboard approximately 650 tonnes of heavy fuel oil of which almost 25 tonnes were lost during the first two days of the incident.

Following the loss of oil, the Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand (MSANZ) gave effect to its Memorandum of Understanding with AMSA by requesting support from AMSA's Environment Protection Group and Environment Protection Standards. Part of this request was to assess what Australian resources could be made available should they be required and for AMSA to act as an adviser to the New Zealand incident controllers

Figure 2 - Discharge Sources by Vessel Type



during the initial eight days of the response. An AMSA officer travelled to New Zealand to provide this support.

Two further AMSA officers were also sent to Gisborne to provide environmental, Geographical Information System and shoreline assessment support as well as operational support for equipment that was deployed during the response.

The* Jody F Millennium *grounded off Gisborne NZ

To prevent the further loss of oil, the salvors offloaded a quantity of oil ashore in MSANZ's recovered oil barges. A quantity of the offloaded oil was transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy tanker HMNZS *Endeavour* that was relocated to Gisborne specifically for this purpose. However, due to bad weather, the *Endeavour* was forced to leave Gisborne before all the oil could be offloaded from the casualty. The remaining oil was transferred to road tankers.

The oil spill response component of the operation involved over 100 people covering command and control, planning, operations, logistics, finance and administration and wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

After lightening the ship through the removal of a significant quantity of its cargo of logs, the salvors refloated the ship on 24 February without further loss of oil. The *Jody F Millennium* was towed from New Zealand to an overseas port on 19 March 2002 for repairs.