



Marine pollution observed in 2013



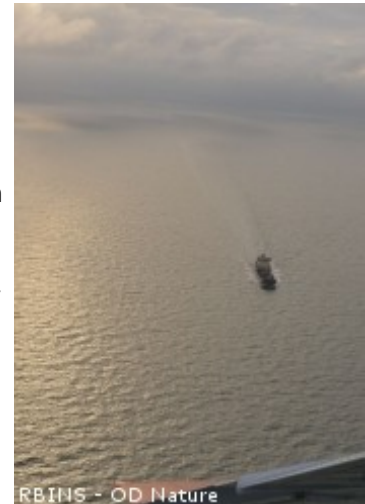
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In 2013, in total ca. 240 flight hours have been performed 'on task' above Belgian and international marine waters, in the framework of the Belgian North Sea aerial survey programme. Of these 'on task' flight hours, ca. 22 hours were conducted for international missions in the framework of the Bonn Agreement and ca. 18 hours for scientific observation flights. As for previous years however, most flights, i.e. 200 flight hours, were national surveillance flights in the framework of the Belgian Coast Guard structure; 160 hours thereof were specifically dedicated to pollution control flights above the

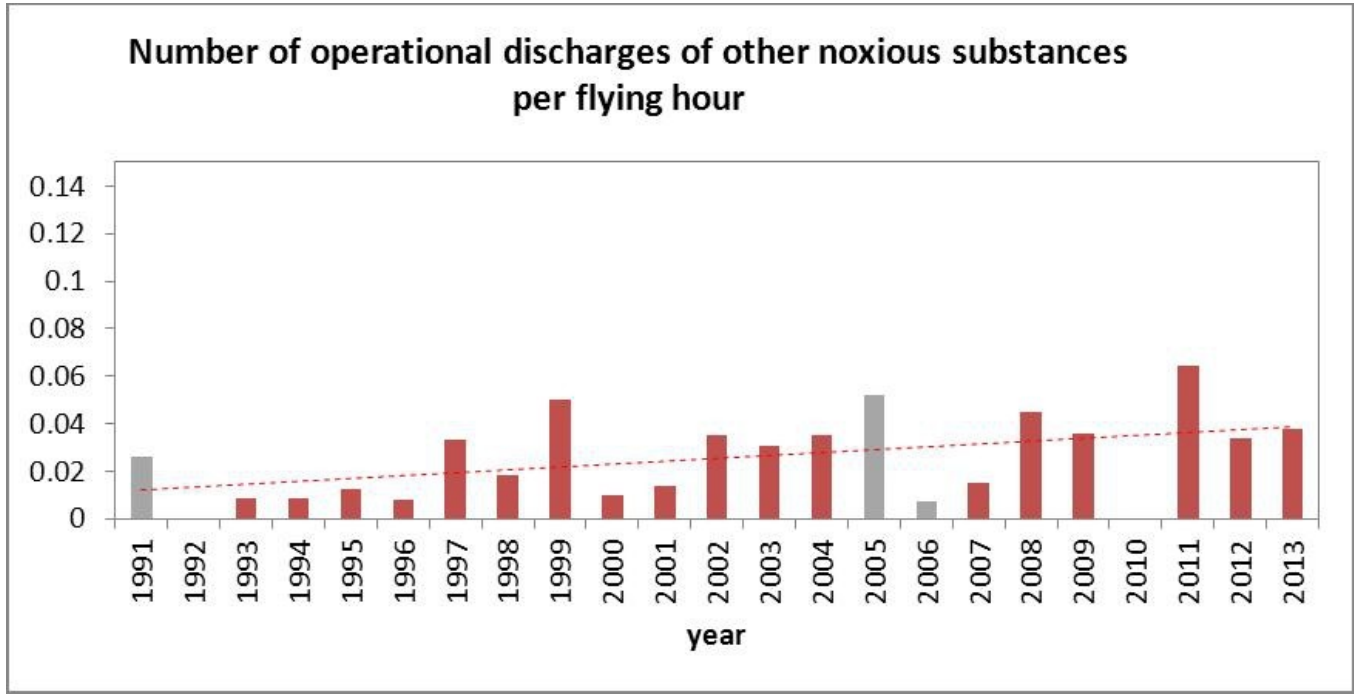
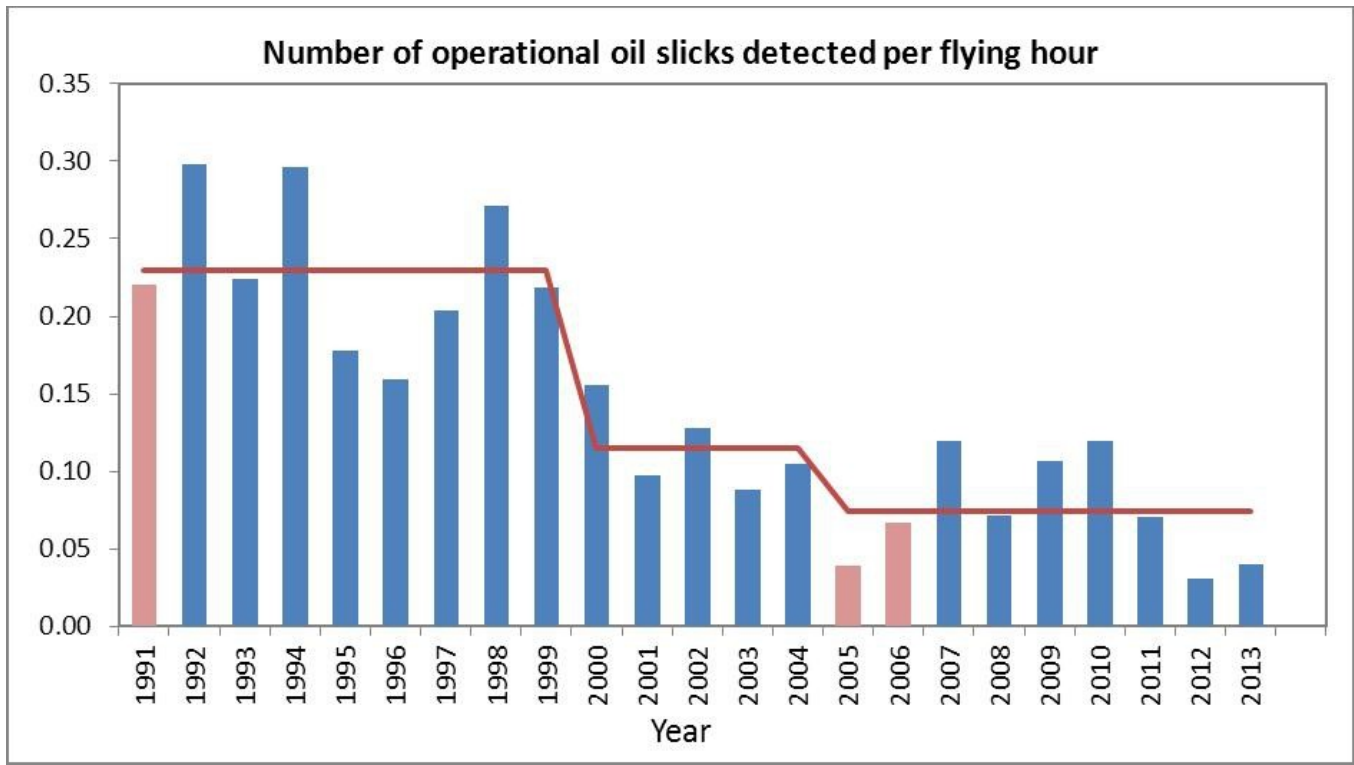
sea and along the Belgian coast.

During these national surveillance flights, a total of 22 discharges were observed and detected in and around the Belgian marine areas in 2013:

- 8 operational oil spills (of which 6 in Belgian waters, 1 in nearby French waters and 1 in nearby British waters);
- 6 accidental oil spills originating from the Baltic Ace ship wreck in Dutch waters;
- 6 spills of harmful substances other than oil (HNS - MARPOL Annex II), of which 3 spills where the nature of the substance could not be identified, 2 illegal discharges of a chemical substance and vegetable oil respectively, and 1 legal discharge of vegetable oil;
- 2 illegal discharges of solid waste (MARPOL Annex V).



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On four occasions (2 MARPOL Annex II cases and two MARPOL Annex V cases), ships were caught red-handed at sea. The first case consisted of a non-permitted discharge of vegetable oil in nearby French waters by a Gibraltarian chemical tanker. Therefore an official statement was drafted and sent to the French authorities. The second case consisted of the discharge of a chemical substance by a Maltese chemical tanker in the Belgian-Dutch marine border area far offshore (EEZ), which again was not in full compliance with the international discharge regulations in force. As the infringement was observed in Dutch waters, an official statement was sent to the Dutch authorities via Belgian judicial channels. The third case consisted of a suspect discharge of coal residues by a South-Korean bulk carrier in nearby British waters. The findings of this observation were immediately forwarded to the British authorities after the flight. The fourth case consisted of an illegal discharge of garbage by a Belgian fishing boat in Belgian waters. The findings were immediately reported to the Belgian Coastguard and an official statement was drafted and sent to the competent Prosecutor's office.

Finally, during transit, take-off and landing procedures 7 oil slicks were observed in the port of Antwerp and 3 were observed in the port of Ostend. These port observations were systematically reported after each flight to the competent police authorities for follow-up.