Marine pollution observed in 2014

In 2014 a total of 251 flight hours has been performed at sea with MUMM's remote sensing aircraft, in the framework of the Belgian North Sea aerial survey programme. Most of these flight hours, i.e. 224 hours, have been executed above and nearby the Belgian marine areas (so-called **'national' flights**). 209 hours thereof have been performed for surveillance tasks in the framework of the Belgian Coastguard, of which 169 were dedicated specifically to the pollution control flights, 40 hours for fishery control flights and 15 hours for scientific observation flights. Besides these national flights, 27 additional flight hours were conducted for **international missions** in the framework of the Bonn Agreement.

During these national surveillance flights, a total of **37 spills of marine pollution** have been observed and detected in and around the Belgian marine areas in 2014:

- 3 probably operational oil spills (2 of which in Belgian and 1 in nearby Dutch waters; from the 3 spills, 2 spills were found not far from the location of the *Baltic Ace* shipwreck);
- 18 accidental oil spills (of which 17 could be linked to the *Baltic Ace* wreck and 1 to the wreck of the *Spiros Amanakis*, all situated in nearby Dutch waters);
- 2 night detections of a not further identified, unknown substance;
- 14 operational spills of other harmful substances than oil (so-called liquid noxious substances or LNS – MARPOL Annex II); 4 of these LNS spills could be linked to a vessel but in each of these cases it was concluded to be a legally permitted discharge.

Finally, during transit, take-off and landing procedures, 11 oil slicks have been observed in the port of Antwerp, 1 in the river Scheldt nearby the port of Antwerp and 1 in the port of Ostend. All collected information on these observations was systematically reported after each flight to the competent police authorities for follow-up.
As shown in the figures below, a contradictory trend in operational ship discharges found at sea is observed over the years: On the one hand, the very low number of operational oil spills found nowadays at sea confirms the significantly decreasing trend observed since the years 2000; on the other hand, the results of 2014 again confirm an increasing trend of operational spills of other harmful substances (LNS) found at sea which has been observed since a couple of years.

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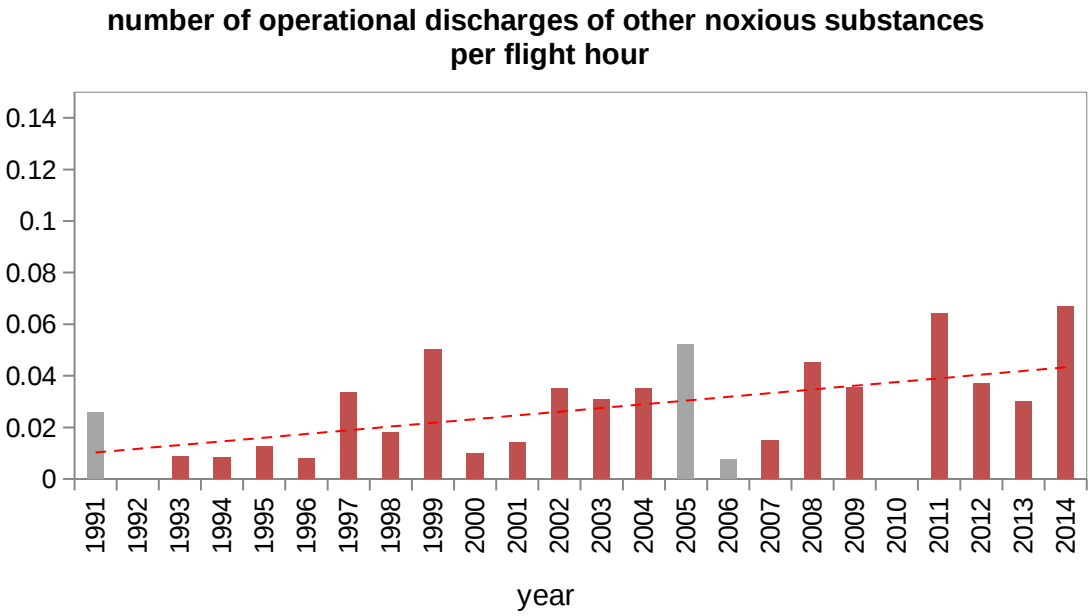

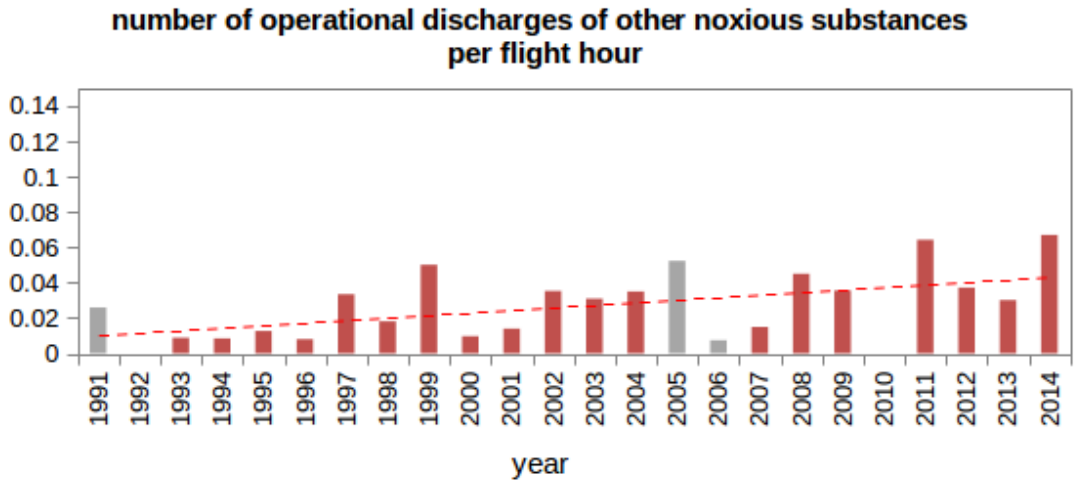

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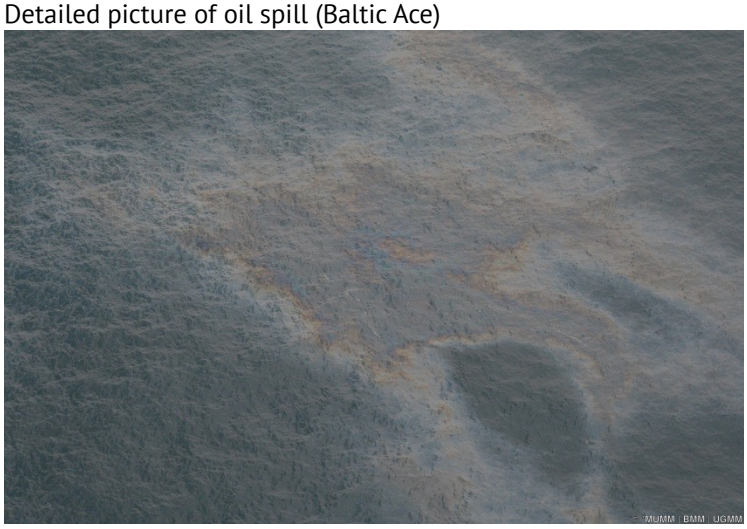
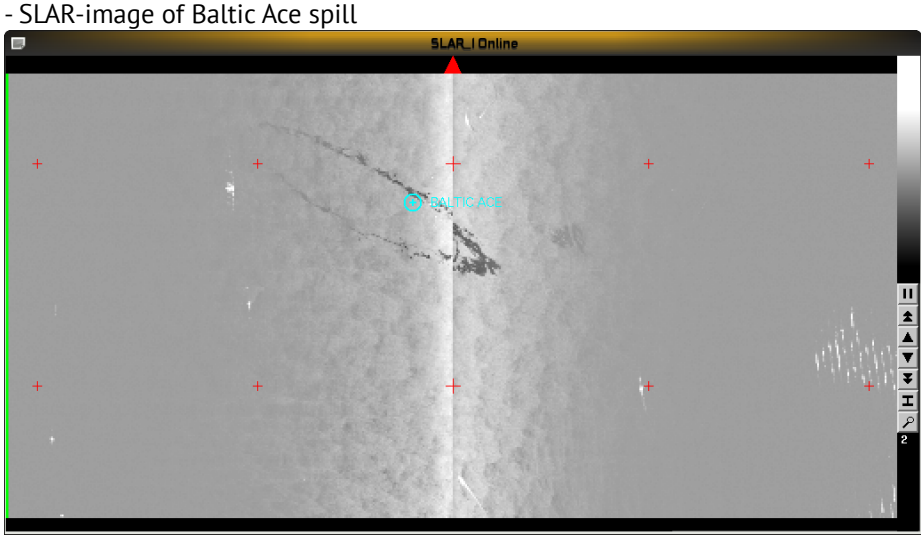
Pictures

Detailed picture of oil spill (Baltic Ace)



- SLAR-image of Baltic Ace spill



- Detailed picture of LNS-spill

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