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Scores of Birds Stricken in Krasnodar After Latest Black Sea Oil Spill

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A recent oil spill in the Black Sea has killed and injured a growing number of birds along Russia's southern coast, wildlife specialists said this week, despite official claims that the spill has been contained.

Authorities said around 30 cubic meters of oil, or roughly 200 barrels, leaked during loading at the Novorossiysk port on Aug. 29. A remote sensing expert with Russia's Maritime Rescue Service told state media that the spill is estimated to cover an area of around 350 square kilometers (135 square miles).

The Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which operates the oil terminal, said cleanup operations had been completed by Aug. 30, adding that air and water tests showed that pollution levels were within their normal limits.

A local wildlife rehabilitation center reported taking in water birds coated in oil along beaches near Novorossiysk and Anapa, the latter of which is a popular tourist destination. Many birds

suffered chemical burns, poisoning and dehydration, according to center staff.

“Birds are collected night and day, many of them [are found] dead,” the center wrote in a Telegram post on Tuesday, after earlier saying that three of 24 birds taken in for treatment had so far died.

Environmental experts told the news outlet Kedr that the oil in the recent spill has been much more harmful to birds than the heavy fuel oil, or mazut, that spilled in the Black Sea in December. The Aug. 29 accident is at least the 12th reported oil spill in the region since that December spill.

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