

Oil-Covered Birds Found Along Russia's Black Sea Coast After Tanker Fire

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Seabirds covered in oil have been found along Russia's Black Sea coast following a fire aboard a tanker linked to the country's so-called shadow fleet, a wildlife rehabilitation center said Monday.

The center in the coastal resort of Anapa [said](#) it had begun receiving oil-coated birds from coastal towns and [appealed](#) for additional volunteers to help treat and feed them.

The reports came after the Liberia-flagged Aframax Rio caught fire in an attack off the coast of Sochi on Oct. 6. The 247-meter (810-foot) tanker has been linked to Russia's shadow fleet.

The blaze was extinguished on Oct. 7 and the vessel was then towed to Novorossiysk, about 200 kilometers (124 miles) northwest of Sochi. Workers started pumping oil out of the damaged tanker Monday, according to [local reports](#).

Related article: [Oil Slick Expands Near Sochi After Tanker Fire, Greenpeace Says](#)

Sochi authorities [denied](#) reports of oil-covered birds, saying beach inspections had found no traces of petroleum products.

Satellite images, however, [showed](#) an expanding oil slick in the days after the fire. A radar image from Saturday [showed](#) the slick stretching northwest toward Novorossiysk.

Independent environmentalist Zhora Kavanosyan [said](#) Novorossiysk's chief rescuer Alexei Oderov had confirmed that petroleum products had washed ashore but that he described the scale of the contamination as "nothing catastrophic."

Meanwhile, Russian transportation and maritime rescue authorities [said Tuesday](#) that inspections along the Krasnodar region's Black Sea coast had found no oil spills.

The latest reports come nearly two years after a major [oil spill](#) in December 2024, when two Russian tankers released thousands of tons of heavy fuel oil into the Black Sea after being damaged in a storm in the Kerch Strait. The spill polluted beaches around Anapa and prompted authorities to declare a federal emergency.

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