

Robben Island penguins hit by fuel from wrecked tanker

September 2 2012



Penguins are pictured in Simon's Town near Cape Town, South Africa, in 2011. Fuel leaking from a Turkish freighter wreck that has been smashed up by a storm has contaminated at least five penguins on South Africa's Robben Island, emergency services said Sunday.

Fuel leaking from a Turkish freighter wreck that has been smashed up by a storm has contaminated at least five penguins on South Africa's Robben Island, emergency services said Sunday.

One penguin from the island had been rescued for treatment and cleaning and a team would also capture the others, they added.

"At this stage it is not clear how seriously the birds are oiled, however [veterinarians](#) will assess the birds and determine where they should be released," said a statement from the service.

The fuel escaped from the wreck of the "Seli 1" freighter, which went down in September 2009 and the discharge has already polluted two nearby beaches. It began leaking the fuel after a weekend storm smashed what was left of the vessel into three pieces.

A trail of fuel eight nautical miles (15 kilometres) in length and three metres wide extended from the vessel between Cape Town Harbour and Robben Island, the statement said.

The area was expected to be cleaned up Monday, the [weather conditions](#) having prevented any earlier intervention.

South Africa's transport ministry requested the release of 40 million rand (3.8 million euro, \$4.8 million) to remove the wreck, [emergency services](#) said.

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