

# South Africa fighting oil spill from MSC container ship

The South African authorities are tackling a spill from an MSC vessel in Algoa Bay that has impacted local wildlife.

[Marcus Hand](#), Editor

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Credit: SAMSA

The South African Maritime Safety Authority said in a statement, “The South African Incident Management Organisation (IMOrg) is responding to an oil spill detected in Algoa Bay on Saturday, 07 September 2024. The spill is believed to have originated from the *Mv MSC Apollo*, a container vessel anchored in the bay.”

The report was first made by a nearby vessel and Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) dispatched a rapid response craft which confirmed the presence of an oily substance in the water.

Despite a helicopter flight and beach foot patrols on Sunday not finding any further evidence of a spill local wildlife has since been affected including a small number of penguins.

“On 10 September, (Monday) SANParks rangers accessed St. Croix Island and identified six oiled penguins—three heavily oiled and three lightly oiled. The penguins were captured and transported to the local SANCCOB facility for treatment. However, two additional oiled penguins evaded capture. Efforts are ongoing to locate and capture them,” SAMSA said.

"Further wildlife surveillance in the area is being coordinated with SANCCOB. The public is urged to report any sightings of oiled birds to SANCCOB, and any oiled mammals should be reported to Bayworld officials. Surveillance and monitoring of the affected areas will continue, weather permitting, to mitigate any environmental impact.”

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The [\*MSC Apollo\*](#) meanwhile is scheduled to berth in the Port of Ngqura as soon as dock space is available.

"The vessel's Classification Society (dealing with technical matters on board the vessel, on behalf of the vessel's Flag State) has been called in to assist. A thorough inspection will be conducted to identify the source of the oil leak. Further updates will be provided as the investigation progresses," said SAMSA.

Waters off South Africa have been seeing far greater numbers of container ships due to diversions via the Cape of Good Hope on voyages between Asia – Europe and the US East Coast to avoid Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.

A number of box ships have lost containers overboard in severe winter weather while transiting the Cape in recent months. The *MSC Antonia* lost 46 containers overboard on 28 August, while the *CMA CGM Belem* lost 99 containers on 16 August.

A month earlier the *CMA CGM Benjamin Franklin* lost 44 containers overboard off the coast of South Africa while sailing round the Cape of Good Hope.