

Staff Reporter

Voicing grave concern over the recent oil spill in the Sundarbans, WildTeam, a nature conservation organization based in Bangladesh, has urged the authorities concerned to prepare a baseline report on the immediate impact which would help assess the ecosystem recovery in the long term.

“We hope that the concerned authorities will prepare a baseline report on the immediate impact based on water quality on the impacted zone, spatio-temporal spread of oil, livelihood and health issues of the local people,” said a WildTeam press release on Saturday.

“The Sundarbans is not only a world heritage site; it is also a Ramsar site. Tigers not only swim in this wetland but also sometimes supplement their diet of land prey with aquatic animals like crabs. About 10 million people’s livelihood depends on the resources of this world’s largest mangrove forest,” it said.

“So, along with everyone, WildTeam family stands by the government, including the Forest Department and all concerned,” it added.

The WildTeam stressed adopting long-term plans like periodic monitoring of spillage area for long-term effects. This will include regular water sampling and monitoring to assess the recovery of embankment vegetation, microbial and invertebrate community, fish stocks, and other higher animal life forms.

It also underscored the need for having an in-depth observation system in place for a long-term ecosystem response to detect delayed impacts and cascade effects on the various ecosystem components.

Social surveys should be repeated to detect long-term impacts on the livelihood of the local community and recovery.

The WildTeam also laid emphasis on having an effective preparedness for any such manmade catastrophes in this fragile ecosystem.

The WildTeam is carrying out its activities to improve the conservation status of key species and habitats in Bangladesh, and developing partnerships, tools, and platforms to build the capacity of organisations and individuals to carry out effective conservation in the country, the release added.