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Potential oil spill risk from shipping and the implications for management in the Caribbean Sea

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Highlights

- â€¢ The potential oil spill risk (POSR) due to shipping activities in the Caribbean Sea was modelled.
- â€¢ Approximately 83% of the Caribbean Sea was found to be at risk from potential oil spills due to shipping activities.
- â€¢ A management framework was proposed to minimise ship generated oil pollution in the Caribbean Sea.
- â€¢ Marine spatial planning and science based policy was a key recommendation

Abstract

The semi enclosed Caribbean Sea is ranked as having one of the most intense maritime traffic in the world. These maritime activities have led to significant oil pollution. Simultaneously, this sea supports many critical habitats functioning as a Large Marine Ecosystem (LME). While the impacts of oil pollution are recognised, a number of management challenges remain. This study applies spatial modelling to identify critical areas potentially at risk from oil spills in the form of a potential oil spill risk (POSR) model. The model indicates that approximately 83% of the sea could be potentially impacted by oil spills due to shipping. The results from this study collectively support a management framework for minimising ship generated oil pollution in the Caribbean Sea. Among the recommended components are a common policy, surveillance and monitoring controls, standards, monitoring programmes, data collection and greater rates of convention ratifications.

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Keywords

Caribbean Sea; Oil pollution; Management framework; Potential oil spills risk (POSR) model

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