OWCN recruited by the United Nations
Mike Ziccardi helps assess damage to the world’s largest mangrove

Above: OWCN Director Mike Ziccardi surveys the damage first hand.

Oil coats the plants of the world’s largest mangrove forest.

Right: Lots of wildlife was spotted like this egret high in the trees.

OWCN Director Mike Ziccardi was activated by USAID along with NOAA and U.S. Coast Guard colleagues to provide assistance in a United Nations mission to conduct an assessment for an oil spill in Bangladesh in early December 2014.

A cargo ship rammed a tanker in the Sela River in Bangladesh spilling 92,000 gallons of oil into the world’s largest mangrove forest that is home to endangered animals like the Irrawaddy dolphin. Mike was chosen for his wildlife expertise and joined a small team of international scientists from places like Geneva, Japan, and Sweden assessing the damage and coming up with a response plan for future disasters.

Ziccardi spent two weeks in Bangladesh and says surprisingly there was very little observable wildlife impact.

“They got very lucky this time,” adds Ziccardi. “Let’s hope there is not a next time but if there is they’ll be better prepared.”

Mike says he was impressed with how well the U.N. functions and thought it was an awesome experience meeting the different experts from around the world.

“These events in other regions of the world truly make me thankful for the systems, facilities, and people that we have in place to help wildlife in California,” said Ziccardi.

Ziccardi pictured with a group of experts assembled from around the world.