



NOAA Web Update May 21, 2010

DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident

Situation: Friday 21 May — NOAA spill specialists continue to advise the U.S. Coast Guard on cleanup options, as well as advising all affected federal, state, and local partners on sensitive marine resources at risk in this area of the Gulf of Mexico. NOAA oceanographers continue to release updated trajectory maps showing the predicted trajectory of the oil slick.

Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles

- Three oiled turtles were captured during the dedicated sea turtle on-water surveys this week: two small Kemp's Ridley and a larger sub-adult Loggerhead. All three turtles were returned to shore and transported to the Audubon Aquarium where they are undergoing de-oiling and care.
- The total number of sea turtle strandings documented since April 30 within the "designated spill area" is 183 (173 dead and 10 alive, of which two died later in rehab). None of the stranded turtles documented to date have had visible evidence of external oil.
- There have been 18 dead dolphins confirmed since April 30 within the designated spill area, none of which have had visible external or internal signs of oiling.

NOAA's Damage Assessment Remediation and Restoration Program is conducting a [Natural Resource Damage Assessment](#) (PDF, 90.8K). The focus currently is to assemble existing data on resources and their habitats and collect baseline (pre-spill impact) data. Data on oiled resources and habitats are also being collected.

NOAA Fisheries made a slight adjustment to the fishery closure area in the Gulf of Mexico based on the latest oil spill trajectories. The new closure area measures 48,005 square miles, which is just under 20% of the Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), compared to the May 18 closure comprising 45,728 square miles, or about 19% of the Gulf of Mexico EEZ.

NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) is supporting the response work in the Gulf with four aircraft from OMAO's Aircraft Operations Center housed at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.