

NOAA Web Update May 26, 2010

DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident



Situation: Wednesday 26 May —

Response:

Shoreline cleanup assessment efforts will now include more beaches farther westward as more shoreline becomes oiled. A new operational center will be opening in New Iberia, La. in the next few days. In addition to assessing oiled beaches, the teams also assess beaches before they are oiled to ensure the best cleanup methods are employed if the area becomes oiled.

A workshop is being held today and tomorrow on dispersants at Louisiana State University, sponsored by NOAA and the University of New Hampshire Coastal Response Research Center. (More details in the last bullet of "NOAA by the Numbers," below.)

Assessment:

NOAA's Damage Assessment Remediation and Restoration Program is conducting a [Natural Resource Damage Assessment](#) (PDF, 89 K). 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 by the Numbers in the Gulf Region May 25, 2010

NOAA aircraft deployed:

- N46RF Twin Otter (DHC-6). Current Station: Mobile, Ala. Began flying marine mammal surveys as of 28 April. Its mission changed on May 5 to multi-spectral scanning to study oil density and thickness.
- N56RF Twin Otter (DHC-6). Current Station: Mobile, Ala. Mission: Marine mammal surveys. First Flight: 5 May.
- N68RF King Air (BE-350ER). Current Station: New Orleans, La. Mission: Coastal photography and mapping. First Flight: 5 May.
- N42RF Orion (WP-3D). Current Station: Tampa, Fla. Mission: Loop Current study. First Flight: 8 May, flew May 21. During its May 21 mission, 62 vertical oceanographic profiles (AXBT, AXCP, and AXCTD) and eight atmospheric profiles (GPS dropwindsondes) were collected. The next flight is planned for Friday, May 28.

NOAA and contract research vessels:

- NOAA Ship *Gordon Gunter*

- *Gunter* completed planned operations on May 22 and transitioned to Pascagoula, Miss. Ship has several necessary repair items to address and departure is currently scheduled for Thursday, May 27.
- Objective: Characterize the water column in the vicinity of the main release to inform response and fishery closure decisions, protect human health.
- NOAA Ship *Thomas Jefferson*
 - *Thomas Jefferson* departed Galveston, Texas at 1400 CDT on Sunday for a mission to deploy US Navy current drifters, profiling floats, and profiling gliders in the vicinity of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The instruments will be used by scientists to monitor the surface and deep currents that are distributing the oil.
 - *Thomas Jefferson* is anticipated to arrive in New Orleans for port call on Friday, May 28.
- NOAA Ships *Oregon II* and *Pisces* are alongside in a repair status.
- R/V *Caretta*, R/V *Gandy* and R/V *HST* are alongside.

SCAT teams: Two aerial reconnaissance teams and three Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique (SCAT) teams were operational on May 24.

Glider operations: Three gliders continue to operate in the LOOP current.

Fishery closure update: NOAA Fisheries Service revised the fishery closure effective 6:00 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, May 25. The closure now encompasses slightly more than 22 percent of the federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico exclusive economic zone. No change was made on May 26.

Marine mammals and turtles (effective May 25):

Sea Turtles

The total number of sea turtles verified from April 30 to May 25 within the designated spill area is 223. The 223 includes three entirely oiled sea turtles that were captured alive during dedicated on-water surveys last week: two small Kemp's Ridley and a larger sub-adult Loggerhead turtle. They were taken to the Audubon Aquarium where they are undergoing de-oiling and care and are doing well. In addition, 207 dead and 13 live stranded turtles (of which three subsequently died in rehab) have been verified. None of the dead or alive stranded turtles have had visible evidence of external oil.

Dolphins

From April 30 to May 25, there have been 22 dead dolphins verified within the designated spill area. The dolphin collected on May 24 is being evaluated. The other 21 dolphins have had no visible evidence of external oil.

NOAA Facilities in the Gulf:

- NOAA Fisheries Regional Office in St. Petersburg, Fla.

- National Marine Sanctuaries: Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, Galveston, Texas; Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Key West, Fla.
- National Estuarine Research Reserves: Mission-Aransas Reserve, Texas; Grand Bay, Miss.; Weeks Bay, Ala.; Rookery Bay, Fla.
- Field offices of the Science Center in Galveston, Texas and Pascagoula, Miss.
- Seafood Laboratory in Pascagoula, Miss.
- Science Center in Panama City, Fla.
- Texas - 13 Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) and the southern regional office in Fort Worth.
- Louisiana - 4 WFOs
- Mississippi - 4 WFOs
- Alabama - 4 WFOs
- Florida (West Coast to Key West) - 4 WFOs (additional 3 WFOs in East coast Florida and National Hurricane Center in Miami)
- National Coastal Data Development Center, National Data Buoy Center - Stennis, Miss.

Miscellaneous:

- *Gordon Gunter* - A media briefing was held dockside in Pascagoula, Miss. with Cmdr. Dave Score and Russell Brown from NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center to provide an overview of the *Gunter* mission and to take reporters' questions.
- Three NOAA communications personnel are detailed to the federal Joint Information Center (JIC) in Robert, La., one communications staffer is at the JIC in Mobile, Ala.
- NOAA and its interagency response partners are working with the Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC), a partnership between NOAA and the University of New Hampshire to bring leading scientists, practitioners, and representatives from federal and state governmental agencies, as well as NGOs, together to address key questions arising from the unprecedented use of chemical dispersants in response to the Deepwater Horizon spill. This interagency workshop will take place May 26-27 at Louisiana State University, and will be closed to the public.