

NOAA Web Update May 30, 2010

DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident



Situation: Sunday 30 May —

Response:

NOAA continues to do trajectories and survey shoreline oiling. Moderate southerly winds are forecast through Tuesday at 5-10 kts. These winds may begin moving oil that has been tending to the southwest from the source towards the Delta. In addition to continued threats to shorelines in Breton and Chandeleur Sounds, model results indicate that some oil may move north to threaten the barrier islands off Mississippi and Alabama later in the forecast period.

Assessment:

NOAA's Damage Assessment Remediation and Restoration Program is conducting a Natural Resource Damage Assessment http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/book_shelf/1959_deepwater-Horizon-NRDA-ORR-web-5-7-10.pdf (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.

Fishery closure update (effective May 30):

- NOAA Fisheries Service revised the fishery closure effective 6:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, May 28. The closure now encompasses approximately 25 percent of the federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico exclusive economic zone.

Marine mammals and turtles (effective May 29):

Sea Turtles

- The total number of sea turtles verified from April 30 to May 29 within the designated spill area is 244. The 244 turtles verified include 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, 227 dead and 14 live stranded turtles (of which three subsequently died in rehab) have been verified. A total of 13 live turtles are now in rehabilitation. One of the live stranded turtles –caught in marine debris -- was disentangled and released. One of the turtles that stranded dead – a Kemp's Ridley - had visible evidence of external oil. All others that stranded dead and alive have not had visible external oil.
- Turtle strandings during this time period have been higher in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama than in previous years for this same time period. This may be due in part to increased detection and reporting, but this does not fully account for the increase.

Dolphins

- From April 30 to May 29, there have been 27 dead dolphins verified within the designated spill area. So far, one of the 27 dolphins had evidence of external oil. It was found on an oiled beach. We are unable at this time to determine whether the animal was externally covered in oil prior to its death or after its death. The other 26 dolphins have had no visible evidence of external oil.
- Since April 30, the stranding rate for dolphins in Louisiana has been higher than the historic numbers for the same time period in previous years. This may be due to increased detection and reporting and the lingering effects of the earlier observed spike in strandings.
- Strandings are defined as dead or debilitated animals that wash ashore.