

NOAA Web Update June 14, 2010

DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident



Situation: Monday 14 June —

Response

OR&R's modeling team continues to generate daily trajectories for the nearshore and offshore surface oil. Overflights are also conducted on a daily basis (weather permitting) to provide field verification of model trajectories.

GeoPlatform.gov/gulfresponse

The public GeoPlatform site (GeoPlatform.gov/gulfresponse) was launched today. The site employs the Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA®), a web-based GIS platform developed by NOAA and the University of New Hampshire's Coastal Response Research Center. ERMA was designed to facilitate communication and coordination among a variety of users — from federal, state, and local responders to local community leaders and the public. The site was designed to be fast and user-friendly, and it will be constantly updated.

Trajectories

Winds are forecast to be primarily onshore (predominantly S/SE winds) but at less than 10 knots through the forecast. Persistent onshore winds have resulted in northward movement of the slick towards the Mississippi/Alabama barrier islands and the Florida Panhandle. Coastal regions in Mississippi Sound west of Freeport may continue to experience shoreline contacts throughout this forecast period. Persistent S/SE winds are also resulting in movement of oil towards the Chandeleur Islands, Breton Sound, and the Mississippi Delta. These regions are also threatened by shoreline contacts within this forecast period.

Closures

NOAA Fisheries Service is not modifying the fishery closure in the Gulf of Mexico today. Any changes to the closure are announced daily at 12 p.m. Eastern at sero.nmfs.noaa.gov and take effect at 6 p.m. Eastern the same day.

Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals (effective June 13, 2010)

A total of 411 sea turtles have been verified from April 30 to June 13 within the designated spill area from the Texas/Louisiana border to Apalachicola, Florida. Between Saturday, June 12, and Sunday, June 13, 13 turtle strandings were verified (five dead and three live from Mississippi, 1 dead from Florida, two dead from Alabama and one live and one dead from Louisiana). The on-water turtle rescue operation led by NOAA, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other partners working under the Wildlife Branch of the Unified Command captured 11 heavily-oiled turtles Sunday and brought them ashore for rehabilitation at the Audubon Nature Institute outside New Orleans. There are now 67 sea turtles in rehabilitation centers. These include 42 heavily-oiled sea turtles captured as part of the on-

water rescue operation and 25 turtles that stranded alive. A total of 57 stranded or captured turtles have had visible evidence of external oil since verifications began on April 30. These include the 48 captured or collected turtles from the on-water operation (42 live turtles, 3 collected dead and 3 that died in rehabilitation), five live stranded turtles (two caught in skimming operations), and four dead stranded sea turtles. All others have not had visible evidence of external oil.

Of the 411 turtles verified from April 30 to June 13, a total of 330 stranded turtles were found dead, 33 stranded alive. Four of those subsequently died. Four live stranded turtles were released, and 25 live stranded turtles are being cared for at rehabilitation centers. Turtle strandings during this time period have been much higher in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle 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.

From April 30 to June 13, 41 stranded dolphins have been verified in the designated spill area. Of this 41, 39 dolphins stranded dead and two stranded alive. One of those dolphins died on the beach and the other that stranded alive in Florida was euthanized. So far, two of the 41 stranded dolphins had evidence of external oil. However, we are unable at this time to determine whether the animals were externally oiled before or after death. Since April 30, the stranding rate for dolphins in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle has been higher than the historic numbers for the same time period in previous years. In part, this may be due to increased detection and reporting and the lingering effects of an earlier observed spike in strandings for the winter of 2010.

A stranding is defined as a dead or debilitated animal that washes ashore or is found in the water. NOAA and its partners are analyzing the cause of death for the dead stranded and dead captured sea turtles and the stranded marine mammals.

Assessment

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) 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.