

## NOAA Web Update June 19, 2010

### DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident



#### Situation: Saturday 19 June

The offshore trajectory maps will be suspended because the northern end of the Loop Current has been pinched off into a large eddy (Eddy Franklin), so there is no clear path for oil to enter the Loop Current from the source. Also, there have been no reports of recoverable oil in the Loop Current or Eddy Franklin, and the oil has moved to the north and away from the Eddy Franklin. We will continue to monitor the area with overflights, vessel observations, and satellite analysis. When the threat of shoreline impacts to the Florida Keys increases, we will resume producing the offshore trajectory maps.

#### Response

OR&R's modeling team continues to generate daily trajectories for the nearshore surface oil. Overflights are also conducted on a daily basis (weather permitting) to provide field verification of model trajectories. Please see [GeoPlatform.gov/gulfresponse](http://GeoPlatform.gov/gulfresponse) for further information on the federal response to the Deepwater Horizon Incident.

#### Trajectories

Winds are forecast to continue to be relatively light (<10 kts) and variable this weekend, then become more persistently onshore (SE) Sunday night through Tuesday. Trajectories indicate continued slow movement of the slick to the east. Coastal regions between Dauphin Island, AL and Panama City, FL continue to be threatened by shoreline contacts within this forecast period. More persistent SE winds later in the forecast period will begin to increase the threat of shoreline contacts to the Chandeleur Islands and the Mississippi Delta.

#### 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](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov) and take effect at 6 p.m. Eastern the same day.

#### Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals (effective June 18, 2010)

A total of 480 **sea turtles** have been verified from April 30 to June 18 within the designated spill area from the Texas/Louisiana border to Apalachicola, FL. Between Thursday, June 17 and Friday, June 18, 11 turtle strandings were verified (one dead turtle in Alabama, one live oiled turtle and three dead turtles in Louisiana, four dead in Mississippi, two dead from Florida). There are now 96 sea turtles in rehabilitation centers. These include 67 heavily-oiled sea turtles captured as part of the on-water rescue operation and 29 turtles that stranded alive. A total of 84 stranded or captured turtles have had visible evidence of external oil since verifications began on April 30. These include the 73 captured or collected

turtles from the on-water operation (67 live turtles, 3 collected dead and 3 that died in rehabilitation), six live stranded turtles (two caught in skimming operations), and five dead stranded sea turtles. All others have not had visible evidence of external oil.

Of the 480 turtles verified from April 30 to June 18, a total of 370 stranded turtles were found dead, 37 stranded alive. Four of those subsequently died. Four live stranded turtles were released, and 29 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.

The NOAA Ship *Pisces* reported a dead 25-foot sperm **whale** located 150 miles due south of Pascagoula, Miss. and approximately 77 miles due south of the spill site earlier last week. The whale was decomposed and heavily scavenged. Samples of skin and blubber will be analyzed. Sperm whales are the only endangered resident cetacean in the Upper Gulf of Mexico.

From April 30 to June 18, 47 stranded **dolphins** have been verified in the designated spill area. Another dead stranded dolphin was verified on Friday from a May 29 stranding in Louisiana. On Thursday, responders freed a dolphin off Florida that was caught between booms; it was classified as stranded. There was no visible oil on the dolphin or in the area. The dolphin was classified as oiled because there was oil on the outside of the two booms. Of the total 47 stranded dolphins, 44 dolphins stranded dead, the dolphin freed from booms and two others stranded alive. Two of the live strandings died. Visible evidence of external oil was found on the two that stranded alive and subsequently died. 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.