

Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: FWC's Response – with a focus on wildlife



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Background

- April 20 -- Explosion aboard Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig off Louisiana
- Largest off-shore oil spill in US history
- Released 35-65K barrels/day before being capped on 15 July
- 1.84 million gallons of dispersant used (58% surface; 42% at depth)



Background

- Oil-water mix recovered: .34.7 million gallons
- >5 tons of oiled material recovered from Florida's beaches
- Lead agencies for response: BP, US Coast Guard, Minerals Management Service



Organization

- Sector Mobile
 - Escambia through Jefferson Counties
- Florida Peninsula Command Post
 - Sectors St. Petersburg, Key West, Miami, Jacksonville
- Florida EOC



Background

- The area of the oil spill includes 8,332 wildlife species:
 - >1,200 fish
 - >200 birds
 - 1,400 mollusks,
 - 1,500 crustaceans
 - 4 sea turtles
 - 29 marine mammals



FWC Involvement

- Reconnaissance
- GIS support
- Scientific support
- NRDA sampling
- Wildlife response



Reconnaissance

- Actionable information allows emergency management officials to make informed, timely decisions regarding response, to better assist impacted areas with response, mitigation and recovery
- Air, ground and sea



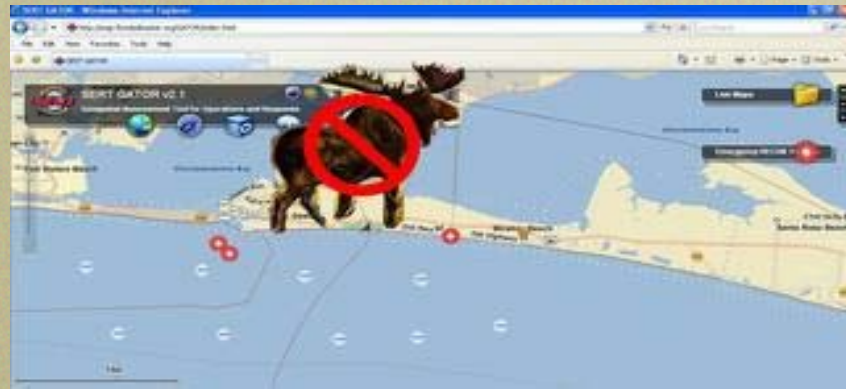
FWC Assets

- 3 Helicopters
- 1 Fixed wing
- 54 Mid-range vessels
- 2 Off-shore vessels
- 7 ATVs
- 249 Personnel



FWC – GIS Support

- Flying and mapping oil in near real time
- Centralized data source for wildlife through FWRI
- SERT Gator
 - <http://map.floridadisaster.org/GATOR/index.html>



FWC – Scientific Support

- Dave Palandro, Harry Norris, and George Henderson are serving as FWC scientific support coordinators at Unified Command Mobile and Florida Peninsula Command Post.
- FWC and EOC



Plans for wildlife response

- Sector Mobile and Peninsula command
 - Wildlife management plans
- Peninsula Command
 - Wildlife operations plan
- Mobile
 - Sea turtle nest excavation plan
 - Guidance for night crews
 - Oiled wildlife response plan



FWC – NRDA

- Natural Resource Damage Assessment
- Assessment of pre- and post-impact.
 - Includes injury assessment which can be ecological or economic
 - Last phase is remediation – making things whole
 - Not just science
 - Science to support litigation – NOAA Protocols
 - Chain of custody procedures for samples



FWC – NRDA

- Technical Working Groups
 - Staff are actively involved in many TWGs
 - Shorebird, marsh bird, diamondback terrapin, waterfowl, shoreline, seagrass, marine mammal, mammal, crocodile, fish, corals, etc.
- Steering committee
 - Gil McRae, Tim Breault, Bud Vielhauer



FWC – Wildlife Response

- FWC is providing guidance
- Tri-state bird rescue and research has been contracted for de-oiling birds
 - Rehab center in Pensacola
 - Stabilization center in PC
- BP is contracting paraprofessionals to team with DOI staff to respond to oiled wildlife.
 - Contracted entities include USDA Wildlife Services, Sumter DART, paraprofessionals, Sea World, University of Florida.
 - No volunteers



FWC – Wildlife Response

- Assisting in developing and reviewing wildlife rehab/response protocols
 - Addressing risks of translocation
 - disease/parasite introduction
 - hybridization (e.g. mottled ducks)
 - Other impacts on resident birds
- Release locations
 - Preventing re-oiling
 - Suitable habitat and resources



FWC – Wildlife Response

- Continue to monitor for non-oil causes of mortality in birds
 - Inability to obtain carcasses due to evidence rules
 - May be easing
 - Working with Tristate and USFWS on non-oil health issues



FWC – Wildlife Response

- Monitoring Perdido Key Beach mouse, shorebirds, marsh birds and other spp.
- Moving turtle eggs from affected nesting areas



Oiled Wildlife – Birds

As of 26 August:

- 246 recovered alive
 - (155 have died, 22 released, 69 in rehab)
- 220 recovered dead
- Total live and dead recovered is 446
- Primarily the bird species are northern gannets, common loons and pied-billed grebes



FWC – Wildlife response

- Oiled wildlife - Marine turtles / marine mammals: FWC is responding in cooperation with Oiled Wildlife Care Network (UC-Davis).
 - Florida's totals of visibly oiled sea turtles now stand at:
 - 140 recovered (2 dead, 1 released, 80 in rehab)
 - One visibly oiled dolphin rescued during the event.
- Necropsies of turtles and marine mammals



Further Information Regarding FWC's Involvement

- <http://myfwc.com/OilSpill/>

