

**Oil Spill**  
 The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was the largest in the history of the United States. It was caused by a failure of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, which was operated by BP. The spill released an estimated 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. The spill had a devastating impact on the environment and the economy of the Gulf of Mexico region.

**Some Effects**  
 The oil spill had a devastating impact on the environment and the economy of the Gulf of Mexico region. It caused the death of many animals, including birds, fish, and marine mammals. The spill also caused significant damage to the coral reefs and other marine life in the Gulf of Mexico.

**Oil Spill**  
 Birds suffered impaired wings due to the matting of their primary feathers. Plated feathers interfere with the bird's natural ability to water-proof their wings.

**Species That Were Affected**  
 Hundreds of different species were put at risk during the spill:

- Seabirds
- Oceanic Turtles
- 200+ Marine Mammals
- 150+ Species of Fish
- Deep-sea Fish

**Sea Turtles**  
 Sea turtles are also dependent on legs functioned properly to the "flap" sea turtles. They also experienced reduction in photosynthesis, growth, and reproduction patterns.

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**Avoidance: Hurricane Avoidance**  
 - Avoiding hurricanes that cause oil spill releases  
 - Implementing a system to avoid oil spill releases  
 - Monitoring to make the best use of the oil spill containment system

**Invertebrate Impacts**  
 - Crustaceans  
 - Mollusks  
 - Polychaetes  
 - Foraminifera

**Long Term Impacts**  
 - Oil spill caused the death of many eggs and larvae of many species of fish.  
 - Oil spill caused the death of many birds and marine mammals.  
 - Oil spill caused significant damage to the coral reefs and other marine life in the Gulf of Mexico.  
 - Oil spill caused significant damage to the economy of the Gulf of Mexico region.

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# What Happened

In 2010, the BP Deepwater Horizon rig blew up in the Gulf of Mexico. It spilled more than 200 million gallons of oil into the ocean. This disaster caused many changes for the organisms living in the gulf and the nearby areas of land.





# Species That Were Affected

Hundreds of different species were put at risk. Among them were:

- 82,000 Birds
- 6,000 Sea Turtles
- 26,000 Marine Mammals
- Unknown amount of fish
- Deep sea coral

# Birds:

Birds suffered impaired wings due to the matting of the oil on their feathers. Matted feathers interfere with the bird's natural ability to waterproof their wings.

## Sea Turtles:

Sea turtles suffered from ingestion of oil, organ damage, and irritation of the skin.

## Deep Sea Corals:

Deep sea corals experienced reductions in photosynthesis, growth, and reproduction processes.

# Immediate Impacts

- Oil coated birds and turtles
- Ingested oil in mammals
- Dead and dying deep sea corals





## Long Term Impacts

### Unbalanced Food Chain

- It was breeding season when the oil spill hit so many eggs and larva were destroyed by the toxins. These age classes were completely wiped out, decreasing the amount of food for consumers.

### Decreased Population

- Since the younger generation had been wiped out, they could not grow up and breed to make their population larger. Scientist have no idea what the population numbers will look like in the future, but in 1989, the Exxon Oil spill wiped out the herring population 4 years after it occurred. It has still not recovered.

### Fishing Decline

- Fish and other types of seafood are no longer used because of the oil toxins found in the systems of the organisms.