

# More oil contaminates parts of Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana

Hiram Lee  
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Oil continues to make its way to the shores of Texas. More tar balls washed ashore on Galveston Island and the Bolivar Peninsula this week, at least 3.5 gallons in two days according to official estimates. In all, 8.5 gallons of the sludge have made their way to Texas beaches since Monday. The new tar balls are being sent for analysis to confirm their source.

On Tuesday, lab analysis revealed the initial oil to find its way to Texas had indeed come from BP's Deepwater Horizon site. The Coast Guard has asserted oil may have come to Texas waters and beaches on the hulls of ships that had passed through the more heavily contaminated sections of the Gulf.

Residents near Louisiana's Lake Ponchartrain, north of New Orleans, report dead fish have now been seen floating ashore just days after the first reports came that the lake had been contaminated by oil. New Orleans' WDSU news quotes one resident, Darrin Johnson, who described seeing "thousands of dead fish and crab" in canals near his home.

Lake Ponchartrain is an important resource for Louisiana's fishermen with some \$4.5 million worth of blue crab, shrimp and other fish pulled from the lake in 2009, according to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Five percent of the lake is now closed to fishing due to contamination from the BP oil spill. Restrictions on fishing can only be expected to grow with oil continuing to spread, further threatening the livelihoods of many of the area's fishermen.

In Mississippi, the waters of Pointe Aux Chenne Bay, part of the marshes of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, have been contaminated by oil sheens and tar balls. According to its website, the Grand Bay reserve has provided "an ecologically-diverse area in which to conduct research focused on the ecology and conservation of coastal habitats" since

1999. Waters in the reserve were first reported contaminated by oil on June 12 when a two-acre patch of oil sheen was discovered near the Mississippi and Alabama state line.

With oil still spilling into the Gulf of Mexico, BP has announced plans to replace the current cap on the leaking Macondo well with another said to be capable of collecting more oil. The current cap is only able to collect 15,000 barrels of oil per day, while BP says the replacement cap will be able to collect as many as 60,000 barrels. Once the current cap is removed, it could take up to four days to install the replacement. During this time, oil would flow freely into the Gulf waters.



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