



5/1/2006

Update:Oil Slick in the Upper Delaware Bay May 1, 2006

An oil slick was discovered in the upper Delaware Bay east of Bombay Hook on the morning of April 25, 2006. The Coast Guard and NJDEP and DENREC from the State of Delaware were on the water placing booms on tributaries and around the slick, which was reported to be six miles long. The slick was a narrow band that was moving towards the New Jersey shore until later in the day when the wind moved it toward Delaware. The same day NJDEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson ordered 110 square miles (70,4000 acres) of New Jersey shellfish beds closed to harvesting to protect the public from potentially polluted shellfish, primarily oysters. 4.27.06

UPDATE: May 1, 2006

Reports from the Field

from Faith Zerbe, Citizen Action Coordinator, Delaware Riverkeeper Network:

The Delaware Beaches were inspected on Sunday, April 30.

The conclusion is that more cleanup crews are needed on the beaches as the tide goes out in order to pick up the oiled debris. The tar balls are easily picked up as well as the oiled vegetation that has been washing up.

The oil is sporadic in nature and clean up teams (three people in each team) from the remediation company have been going through the debris on the beach systematically. However, more teams are needed in order to effectively cover the shorelines. Also, there seemed to be a lack of urgency in the cleanup effort. Teams were not moving quickly; there seemed to be little recognition of the critical importance of fast and effective removal of the tar balls and oil-covered debris.

Because there are not enough teams, many of the tar balls get washed back into the bay with high water and become re-suspended. There is also a concern that as the temperature warms, the tar balls become more fluid, coating vegetation and/or seeping into the ground and wetland areas.

It was also noted that clean up would be more effective if more workers are hired that know the local areas, the location of wetlands and other sensitive environmental features.

Oil covered birds and wildlife were not observed firsthand but were noted in Coast Guard reports.

DRN has submitted these recommendations for substantial increase of the number and quality of clean up teams to the Coast Guard, along with an observation report that more urgent attention is needed. A report from the New Jersey bay shore will be forthcoming.

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