Beyond the Response:  
a look at the science & policy behind dispersants

Sea Grant-GoMRI partnership to share oil spill science

Emily Maung-Douglass, Ph.D.

BROADCAST LIVE
from the
New Orleans Area Committee meeting at NASA Michoud
December 15, 2015
Agenda

9:50 AM CST | Mace Barron, Ph.D.
Comparative toxicity of chemical oil dispersants

10:10 AM CST | Vijay John, Ph.D.
The Science and Technology of Dispersants

10:30 AM CST | Melissa Daigle, J.D.
Considering dispersants from a legal & policy perspective

10:50-11:00 AM CST | Barron, John, Daigle
Panel-style Q&A session
Outreach Products

Sharing peer-reviewed, published science

– Science outreach publications
  • Focused on science topics identified by our audiences

– Science seminars & input sessions
  • Presentations by experts
  • Continue to identify needs of coastal audiences

http://gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach
Outreach Products

**OIL SPILL SCIENCE**

**SEA GRANT PROGRAMS OF THE GULF OF MEXICO**

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**THE SEA GRANT AND GOMRI PARTNERSHIP**

The mission of Sea Grant is to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal, marine and Great Lakes resources in order to create a sustainable water and environment. There are 31 university-based Sea Grant programs throughout the coastal U.S. These programs are primarily supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the states in which the programs are located.

In the immediate aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Sea Grant provided millions over a six-year period to create the Gulf of Mexico Research Institute, in New Orleans. It is an industry-led research program that studies the effects of hydrocarbon release on the environment and public health, as well as develops improved spill mitigation, oil detection, characterization and remediation technologies. Sea Grant is led by an independent and academic 20-member research board.

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**FOSSILS AND DISASTERS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO**

Christine Hall, Cassie Graham, Emily Moon-Douglas, Stephen Sampier, LeDon Swann, and Monica Wilson

Coastal and ocean ecosystems provide benefits to people, including clean water, protection from storms, and food. Fishery resources are an essential part of these ecosystems and are considered to be common property. Thus, fisheries, or all of the activities involved in catching fish and shellfish, are managed by government for the benefit of all citizens. To manage and conserve fishery resources, especially in the face of oil spill disasters, science is key.

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**THE DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL'S IMPACT ON GULF SEAFOOD**

Larissa J. Graham, Christine Hall, Emily Moon-Douglas, Stephen Sampier, LeDon Swann, and Monica Wilson

Even five years after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, consumers have concerns about whether Gulf seafood is safe to eat. Federal and state scientists tested more than 26,000 seafood samples during the oil spill and did not find a single sample where levels of chemicals from oil or dispersants were unsafe. Scientists are still conducting studies to ensure that the seafood harvested from the Gulf is safe to eat.

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**Commercial fishermen have been working around the Gulf since the early 1800s.** Three commercially important types of shrimp—brown, pink and white. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo)

In recent years, the Gulf of Mexico fishing industry has been negatively impacted by several disasters. Record-breaking hurricanes—Katrina and Rita in 2005 and Gustave and Ike in 2008—dramatically changed infrastructure such as fish houses, boats, and supplies.** The Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 continued the devastation to both humans and natural resources, and the extent of the damage is still being investigated today. These disasters and their consequences have become significant in understanding fisheries, especially from a management perspective.**

Thus, the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GOMRI; see sidebar) has funded scientists to investigate oil spill impacts, so that managers, as well as emergency responders, policy-makers, fishermen, and others can make informed decisions.

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**Local seafood is an important part of the Gulf of Mexico community and livelihood. During the oil spill, there was much concern about whether local seafood was safe to eat. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo)**

Scientists have found that eating seafood is good for people's health and recommend that most people eat two servings of seafood about the size of the palm of your hand, each week. However, experts encourage pregnant women, young children, elderly individuals, and those with certain health conditions to avoid eating some types of seafood. This includes seafood that is raw, partially cooked, or that which tends to be high in mercury concentrations. Fish with high mercury include albacore, shark, swordfish, and king mackerel.

If seafood is good for our health, then why are there recommended limits to the amount of some types of seafood we should eat? Seafood, like other foods that we eat, can be exposed to contamination through the natural environment, pollutants, and chemical spills, and processing and handling procedures. The U.S.
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