

### **IOPC FUNDS: REPORT ON OCTOBER 2010 MEETINGS**

The IOPC Funds held meetings of its governing bodies during the week 18 to 22 October. Sixty-one Member States attended concurrent sessions of the 1992 Fund Administrative Council (acting on behalf of the 1992 Fund Assembly, the Supplementary Fund Assembly, the 1992 Fund Executive Committee and the 1971 Fund Administrative Council.

Proceedings opened with a tribute to Mr John Wren - Prior to the opening of all of the sessions of the IOPC Funds' governing bodies the Chairman of the 1992 Fund Assembly paid tribute to the late Mr John Wren, former Head of the United Kingdom delegation to the sessions of the IOPC Funds' and IMO's governing bodies from 1993-2005 and member of the IOPC Funds' Joint Audit Body, who had sadly passed away on 6 October 2010.

The meetings report can be found at <http://www.iopcfund.org/newspdfs/Oct10e41.pdf>

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN MARKS MILESTONE**

Athens, 22nd November 2010 - With the ratification by Syria of two of the most innovative legal instruments for environmental protection, the Offshore and the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocols of the Barcelona Convention(1) will soon enter into force. Syria becomes the first among the Mediterranean countries to have ratified the Barcelona Convention, its seven Protocols and all its amendments.

“At a time of serious concerns for our environment, as witnessed by the accident in the Gulf of Mexico and the record number of natural disasters linked to climatic variations, Mediterranean countries stepped up one gear in their efforts to protect our sea and coastal area. The leadership of Syria should be commended”, said Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, UNEP/MAP Deputy Coordinator and Officer in charge. “The entry into force of these two Protocols provides the region with unique and powerful legal instruments to address environmental threats linked to offshore platforms and coastal degradation.

These developments will allow Mediterranean countries to activate a regional response mechanism in case an accident similar to the one on the Gulf of Mexico would happen, and will also allow for better preparedness and protection of our coasts against climate variability”.

Read more: [http://www.rempec.org/news.asp?theIDS=2\\_39&daChk=0&theName=News](http://www.rempec.org/news.asp?theIDS=2_39&daChk=0&theName=News)

### **UK: GOVERNMENT TO LAUNCH NORTH SEA REVIEW**



The Government will launch a review of environmental regulation of North Sea oil and gas rigs in January in the wake of BP's catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The move comes as oil giants from Chevron to BP prepare to launch ambitious deep-water drilling campaigns in sensitive areas west of Shetland for the first time.

Chris Huhne, the Energy Secretary, insisted following the accident eight months ago that Britain's "safety and environmental regulatory regime is fit for purpose". But now that investigations have shed light on some causes of the Gulf of Mexico incident, his department will begin a wholesale

review of environmental precautions in the New Year. Read the complete text of this article: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/oilandgas/8148810/Government-to-launch-North-Sea-review.html>

### **NIGERIA: RAMPAGING OIL SPILL IN OGBUNUGBENE AND OTHER COMMUNITIES**

50,000 citizens in Bayelsa, one of the richest oil and gas-producing states of the Niger Delta, are currently at their wit's end as an economy-crippling oil spill flooded a community river and threw the fishing folks into

temporary unemployment. The environmental mishap that occurred in facilities allegedly belonging to Agip, an Italian oil major, took place between August and last October. The latest incident took place on October 29, at Ogbunugbene, an Osiama community in Sagbama Local Government Area of President Goodluck Jonathan's home state. Read more: <http://www.independentngonline.com/DailyIndependent/Article.aspx?id=24343>

## **USA: PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION - OIL SPILL FINDINGS RELEASED BY PANEL**

The [oil industry](#) and the government were unprepared for a deepwater blowout and [oil spill](#) like the one this year in the Gulf of Mexico, leading to significant delays in capping the well and major environmental damage, the staff of the presidential spill commission concluded in two reports published on Monday.

While oil companies and government agencies learned valuable lessons and developed useful technology from the Deepwater Horizon disaster, the country is still not fully ready to cope with a similar accident, the staff members found.

One major finding was that the oil companies, despite multibillion-dollar profits over the past several years, have devoted only minuscule amounts of money to planning to control or clean up after a significant spill. Government, too, neglected to devote adequate personnel, money and technology to preparing for a major offshore accident, one report said.

Read this article at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/23/science/earth/23spill.html?\\_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1290524577-Q7Aq2kOdoSDvA8dXDV9Qvw](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/23/science/earth/23spill.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1290524577-Q7Aq2kOdoSDvA8dXDV9Qvw)

## **AUSTRALIA: MONTARA SPILL REPORT - FAULTS THAI-OWNED FIRM OVER OIL SPILL**

November 24 - Australia said on Wednesday that a Thai-owned oil firm's "widespread and systematic shortcomings" caused the worst offshore drilling accident in the country's history, which created a massive oil slick.

A government report found operator PTTEP Australasia failed to observe "sensible" practice at the Montara field in the pristine Timor Sea off Australia's northern coast, Resources Minister Martin Ferguson told parliament. A damaged well pumped thousands of barrels of oil into the sea for almost 10 weeks before it was capped, prompting conservatives to warn of an environmental catastrophe for the region's marine and bird life.

"The widespread and systematic shortcomings of PTTEP Australasia's procedures were a direct cause of the loss of well-control," Ferguson said.

The report also criticised the Australian regulator which oversaw the project, saying its "minimalist approach" to its responsibilities gave it little chance of discovering the company's poor practices. Read the complete article: [http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20101124/wl\\_asia\\_afp/australiathailandindonesiaoilenvironmentpollution](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20101124/wl_asia_afp/australiathailandindonesiaoilenvironmentpollution)

## **USA: 5 MYTHS ABOUT BP SPILL'S ECOLOGICAL IMPACT**

Oil gushed into the Gulf of Mexico from a hole in the depths of the ocean for 86 days following the Deepwater Horizon explosion, resulting in one of the largest maritime oil spills in history. Since the well head was capped in July, the surface oil has seemingly disappeared, there are no new images of oiled birds or massive surface slicks visible from space, some fisheries have reopened and the previously intense media coverage has shifted to the economy and the recent election.

Many are left with the impression that the BP spill event is over, and it is time to move on. However, many environmental scientists expect that the effects of this oil spill are only now becoming evident and that they may persist for many years. As scientists continue their efforts to study the ecological effects of this massive disaster, they seek to dispel some myths that are gaining traction with the public. At a recent workshop sponsored by the National Science Foundation, participating researchers identified some common myths that are emerging and felt compelled to provide scientific perspectives on these issues for the benefit of the public and decision makers. The main message is this: it is likely that we have not yet seen the most significant impacts for marine and coastal organisms and humans. Oil spills will continue to occur in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere, and we have to learn our lessons from this disaster to plan for the future. Read more about the 5 myths in an article submitted to the Houston Chronicle by Professor Steven Pennings of the University of Houston at: <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/editorial/outlook/7304197.html>

## **USA: POST-OIL SPILL RESTORATION BEGINS IN ALABAMA**

November 21 - An effort to restore Alabama's coastline kicked off this weekend. Alabama Coastal Foundation, Mobile Baykeeper, The Nature Conservancy and The Ocean Foundation have formed a coalition to build 100 miles of oyster reefs and plant and promote 1,000 acres of marsh. It's called 100-1000: Restore Coastal Alabama. The official start began Saturday morning at Helen Wood Park on Dauphin Island Parkway in Mobile. The National Wildlife Federation gave a \$50,000 donation to the restoration fund. The Alabama Wildlife Federation also gave to the fund by donating \$10,000. Read more at: [http://www.fox10tv.com/dpp/news/gulf\\_oil\\_spill/post-oil-spill-restoration-begins](http://www.fox10tv.com/dpp/news/gulf_oil_spill/post-oil-spill-restoration-begins)

# USA: OIL SPILL CALCULATIONS RELEASED IN AUGUST UNDERGO FURTHER REVIEW

Editor: The Oil Spill Calculator has been the subject of quite a lot of controversy. This report has been issued by the Federal Interagency Group.

The Federal Interagency Solutions Group, established at the request of the U.S. Coast Guard and authorized under a directive from the National Incident Commander (NIC), is releasing today a peer-reviewed report that details the scientific calculations of the Deepwater Horizon BP Oil Spill "Oil Budget Calculator" response tool announced last August. The report, developed in collaboration with federal and independent scientists and following an extensive review of the initial findings, revises as necessary the estimated short-term fate of the oil discharged from the wellhead through mid-July when the well was capped.

The Oil Budget Calculator's purpose was to describe the short-term fate of the oil and to guide immediate efforts to respond to the emergency. It does not provide information about the impact of the oil, nor indicate where the oil is now. The Oil Budget Calculator uses collected or reported data, such as the amount captured at the wellhead, combined with model-projected estimates based on historical oil spill data for similar types of oil, as well as the expertise and observations of oil- and oil spill-response scientists from government agencies, academia and the energy industry.

Improvements have been made to the calculator since it was first used. The revised Oil Budget Calculator was adjusted based on modified calculations and modeling, as well as additional knowledge about the Deepwater Horizon spill provided by the science team. The revised calculations provide the basis for the updated budget issued in the report, as well as the best- and worst-case scenarios.

"As we said in August, we promised to provide the technical documentation for the Oil Budget report and refine our estimates where possible. This report fulfills that promise. The Oil Budget was not created to draw conclusions about the long-term environmental impact. The estimates were designed to guide operational response decisions and provide clarity on how much oil could be captured or mitigated and how much oil was not recoverable," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "Fully understanding the damages and impacts of the spill on the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem is something that will take time and continued monitoring and research by federal and academic scientists."

Today's report provides the technical basis underlying the Calculator's oil fate estimates used to help respond to the spill. This report, following additional assessment and peer-review, is largely consistent with early results released by the federal government. The most significant change is a doubling of the expected amount of oil classified as "chemically dispersed" — revised from 8% to an estimated 16% with a possible range of between 10% and 29%. Additional data and studies have over the course of the past few months led the oil budget team to relax certain initial conservative assumptions with regard to the effectiveness of dispersant operations. The early estimate of the percentage of "other" (or, "residual") oil was 26%; the current version of the Calculator estimates it as 23%, and qualifies this estimate with the belief that, with high confidence, the true percentage should be between 11% and 30%.

Oil Budget (Released Aug. 4)	Oil Budget Technical Report
Category.....% of Total	Category.....+/- % of Total.....Change
Direct Recovery.....17%	Direct Recovery.....17%.....None
Burned.....5%	Burned.....5%.....None
Skimmed.....3%	Skimmed.....3%.....None
Chemically Dispersed.....8%	Chemically Dispersed.....16%.....+8%
Naturally Dispersed.....16%	Naturally Dispersed.....13%.....-3%
Evaporated or Dissolved.....25%	Evaporated or Dissolved.....23%.....-2%
Other.....26%	Other.....23%.....-3%

The three lead editors of the report were William Lehr, Ph.D., senior scientist with NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration; Sky Bristol, science coordinator for informatics, U.S. Geological Survey; and Antonio Possolo, Ph.D., chief of the Statistical Engineering Division, National Institute of Standards and Technology. The report includes major contributions from 15 international academic institutions, government agencies and industry experts as well as additional contributions from a wide-ranging group of others. The peer-review process was independently coordinated through the University of New Hampshire's Coastal Response Research Center in Durham, N.H.

The report specifically recommends future research and planning to be directed to three areas that would reduce the uncertainty of the estimates and improve future response activities:

(1) Protocols for surface and subsurface sampling: Although oil samples were collected for impact assessment, samples were not systematically collected to support the development of the Oil Budget Calculator. For example, samples often came from skimming barges where oil and water mixtures in different states of degradation were blended together. Future response plans should specify methods for gathering proper representative samples.

(2) Dispersed oil droplet size: A major improvement in estimating dispersant efficiency would be possible if practical operational tools and methods existed to characterize droplet size distribution of subsurface oil.

(3) Basic models for longer-term processes: Although longer-term processes such as biodegradation often happen outside the time frames of the response, understanding and being able to predict such longer-term changes may be useful in making response decisions.

This report was written to document for the scientific community and other interested parties the technical underpinnings of the Calculator and provide recommendations for future research and refinement of the tool for possible use in future spills. The full 217-page report, including appendices and peer-review team comments, is available online: <http://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/OilBudge...>

## TECHNOLOGY

Editor: Part of ISCO's mission is to disseminate information on new technology that has application in spill prevention and response. Members and other readers are invited to submit reports to the editor – [john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org](mailto:john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org)

## PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Editor: This section allows Corporate Members to inform readers about launches of new products and services. Send information to the editor [john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org](mailto:john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org)

## EVENTS

*For more comprehensive information on upcoming events & training courses click [HERE](#) and select "Events"*

### SWEDEN: WMU – IMO CONFERENCE ON OIL SPILL RISK MANAGEMENT

WMU, in collaboration with IMO, is currently organizing a Conference on Oil Spill Risk Management that will take place at the World Maritime University from 7-9 March 2011, in Malmö, Sweden.

The conference will address an array of oil pollution response and risk management topics ranging from risk assessment and contingency planning to recent future changes in oil and gas transportation. The conference will also consider oil spill case studies from around the world. Keynote speakers include Admiral Thad Allan, Incident Commander for the Gulf of Mexico spill in the US and Mr. Carl-Henrik Svanberg, Chairman, BP.

The call for papers is now open, as is the registration for this event. We are hoping for strong engagement from both government and industry in this important Conference and from the OPRC-HNS Technical Group, in particular, as some of the key constituents in this field.

More information: <http://www.wmu.se/Calendar/OilSpillRiskManagement2011/tabid/332/Default.aspx>

### SINGAPORE: INTERNATIONAL CHEMICAL AND OIL POLLUTION CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2011

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore have announced the dates for the International Chemical and Oil Pollution Conference and Exhibition (ICOPCE), which be held from 11 to 13 April 2011. More info later.

### TUNIS: SEMINARS

International Safety Guide for Oil Tankers and Terminals (ISGOTT) Seminar on 13-16 December, 2010; Droit International de L'environnement : Etude et Appréciation Critique des Conventions en Matière d'Environnement 20-21 December, 2010; Les Clauses attributives de compétence dans le transport maritime des marchandises: analyse détaillée et appréciation critique 23-24 December, 2010. All three seminars organised by L'Institut International de Droit Maritime et des Transports (I.I.D.M.T). For more info, Email [iidmt@gnet.tn](mailto:iidmt@gnet.tn)

## PUBLICATIONS

### INTERNATIONAL SALVAGE UNION: SALVAGE WORLD

The latest issue of *Salvage World* contains news from ISCO Members and others in the ISU. It includes several interesting accounts of recent marine salvage operations.

Go to: [http://www.marine-salvage.com/salvage\\_world/Salvage%20World%20Q3%202010.pdf](http://www.marine-salvage.com/salvage_world/Salvage%20World%20Q3%202010.pdf)

## CORMACK'S COLUMN



*In this issue of the ISCO Newsletter we are printing the third of four articles contributed by Dr Douglas Cormack.*

*Dr Douglas Cormack is an Honorary Member of ISCO. As the former Chief Scientist at the British Government's Marine Pollution Control Unit and head of the UK's first government agency, the Warren Spring Laboratory, Douglas is a well known and highly*

respected figure in the spill response community. He is the Chairman and a founder member of the International Spill Accreditation Association.

## HARMONISATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT (PART THREE)

In the meantime, it was shown from the known distillation profiles of individual crude oils, that all components with boiling points above 250°C would evaporate from slicks within a few hours to reduce them by up to ~ 30% by weight, while the un-evaporated remainder could form water-in-oil emulsions of increasing viscosity as water-contents rose to ~ 80%. Again, it was shown by observing the lifetimes of slicks that their half-lives (rates of removal being proportional to area and hence to amount present) could be related to their viscosities, thus enabling the quantities likely to reach shore to be estimated from the time required to arrive under known conditions of wind and current. A further consequence of this knowledge was that the amounts naturally evaporating and dispersing, dwarfed anything achievable by dispersant-application or mechanical-recovery, these limitations confirming the benefit of avoiding releases from ships and wells, of removing cargo and bunkers from casualties in safe havens, and of capping blow-outs expeditiously. Indeed, in adjudicating salvage awards for environmental protection from 1994 until the advent of fixed costs, knowledge of evaporative loss, emulsion formation and half-life<sup>3</sup> was used to compare the amounts stranded with those which would have, had the salvage action not been taken despite prohibition of safe-haven use in all cases.

The importance of preventing oil-release is further confirmed by the knowledge that while a boom with a 10 m mouth-width moving at 1 knot has an encounter-rate of 1.8 tonnes per hour and *pro rata* on width, it cannot move faster and will lose even this effectiveness in the presence of waves. Again, it is known that the associated skimmer and pump will not wholly convert encounter- to recovery-rate in the presence of waves and/or pollutants of even moderate viscosity. Thus, while skimmer and pump might be quoted as having a design-capacity of 100 tonnes per hour, only a tenth of this would be possible with a boom mouth-width of 50m so long as waves and viscosity were not adverse. Again, with the recovered pollutant containing 80% emulsified water let alone the accompanying free-water, it is not surprising that incident reports rarely include the amounts of oil recovered at sea, these usually being derisible in comparison with the recovery capacity nominally deployed. However, encounter rates are higher for slicks pressed against shores by wind and subsequently stranded by the ebbing tide, though this advantage is often diminished by the high viscosities of post-release emulsions and by the need to break them to recycle their oil-content. Again, the scraping of such emulsions from sand-beaches has the disadvantage of co-collecting sand, while dispersion of the lower-viscosity emulsions into the surf would avoid recovery, separation/processing and recycling.

Thus, even if dispersion and mechanical recovery techniques are operated in full knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, we see that their operational capacity matches only the smallest releases; that reliance must be placed on natural evaporation/dispersion for reduction of the larger, with dispersion/recovery techniques being applied only to the residual amounts eventually threatening coastal resources; and that the main expenditure must be on preventing releases in the first place. However, we see that adoption of knowledge-based assessment, prevention and response has been prevented by a lazy acquiescence with beliefs in species-extinction/ecological disaster and with those which encouraged reliance on equipment and techniques wholly inadequate for other than the few thousand tonnes from initial tank rupture on collision or grounding; and that adoption of knowledge-based assessment, prevention and response requires such beliefs to be replaced by acceptance of natural evaporation/ dispersion as being the more beneficial the greater the release. To be continued.

1 The *Rational Trinity: Imagination, Belief and Knowledge*, D.Cormack, Bright Pen 2010 available at [www.authorsonline.co.uk](http://www.authorsonline.co.uk)

2 *Response to Oil and Chemical Marine Pollution*, D. Cormack, Applied Science Publishers, 1983.

3 *Response to Marine Oil Pollution - Review and Assessment*, Douglas Cormack, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.

### ISCO NOTICES

It's coming round to the time of year when providers of scheduled training courses are finalising their course calendars for 2011. Please make a diary note to send details to ISCO as soon as available in order that we can update the Training Course sections of the Events Pages on the ISCO website. Training organisations that provide bespoke training courses at clients' premises should consider advertising in the Training Providers section of the International Directory of Spill Response Supplies and Services (see below).

### INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY - SPILL RESPONSE SUPPLIES & SERVICES

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Legal disclaimer: Whilst ISCO takes every care to ensure that information published in this Newsletter is accurate unintentional mistakes can occur. If an error is brought to our attention, a correction will be printed in the next issue of this Newsletter.