

Bottlenose dolphins swimming through oiled waters, which harms their health and ability to reproduce.



Brown Pelican coated in oil in Grand Isle, LA



Offshore Drilling Endangers Our Marine and Coastal Areas

The United States is home to beautiful beaches and ecologically crucial coastal areas. Its waters abound with marine life and one-of-a-kind ecosystems. Yet, the Trump administration is considering opening more than 90 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf to offshore oil drilling – jeopardizing irreplaceable natural treasures to prolong our dependence on fossil fuels.¹

Oil spills harm marine life and the health of our ocean ecosystems

Oil spills can cause immediate death or injury to marine wildlife and cause lasting harm by negatively affecting their reproductive capacity.²

- The BP Deepwater Horizon spill killed or injured up to 25,900 marine mammals, along with over 6,000 sea turtles and an estimated 800,000 coastal birds.³ The spill also contaminated over 1,300 miles of shoreline from Texas to Florida, including more than 600 miles of ecologically important coastal wetlands.⁴
- Spills like Deepwater Horizon also cause long-term harm by compromising marine species' critical foraging, migratory and breeding habitats.⁵
- Lingering contamination from the Deepwater Horizon spill has continued to cause death and disease among dolphin and sea turtle populations, even years later.⁶

Spills threaten the health of our natural areas and continue to affect ecosystems and people long after the spill has ended.⁷

- Toxic compounds from oil spills accumulate up the food chain, beginning with zooplankton and working their way up to larger animals such as whales and pelicans.⁸
- The dispersants used to help mitigate spills can also harm marine wildlife since dispersants increase the chance that fish, coral and other organisms will be exposed to the harmful chemicals in oil.⁹
- Oil can persist in the environment for up to a century, often forming tar mats and balls that litter coastal areas for years to come.¹⁰
- Spills release significant amounts of methane, a powerful contributor to global climate change, which poses a significant risk to the future health of our oceans and coastal areas. The Deepwater Horizon spill released an estimated 260,000 to 520,000 tons of methane-rich natural gas into the ocean and atmosphere.¹¹

Offshore drilling operations harm marine and coastal areas

- Offshore drilling produces pollution at every step of the process – from exploration and drilling through the production, transportation and processing of oil.¹² Drilling operations dump drilling fluid and metal cuttings into the ocean, with a single well discharging as much as 1,500 to 2,000 tons of waste material.¹³
- Seabirds are killed and injured by colliding with offshore drilling platforms, becoming contaminated by oil, or being burned by flares.¹⁴ Each year, roughly 200,000 migratory birds are killed near offshore drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁵
- Infrastructure related to onshore oil transmission and distribution damages beaches, wetlands and coastal habitats.¹⁶
- Offshore drilling threatens communities along the Atlantic Coast. Natural areas that are visited and treasured by thousands of people are at risk of becoming tainted by pollution and damage from drilling, spills and onshore infrastructure.¹⁷
- The 46 national parks along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, including Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland and Virginia and Acadia National Park in Maine, preserve undeveloped coastal areas and host more than 72 million visitors each year.¹⁸

Seismic testing disrupts fish and marine mammal populations

Seismic testing during fossil fuel exploration harms fish and marine mammals by impairing their hearing and affecting their ability to communicate and reproduce. It may also lead to marine mammal strandings.¹⁹

- Seismic oil and gas exploration requires frequent, intense and numerous air gun blasts that generate a huge amount of acoustic energy that is reflected off underwater geologic structures, disrupting marine life.²⁰ The U.S. Department of the Interior estimates that planned seismic exploration would disrupt marine mammal behavior over 13 million times during the initial 6-7 years.²¹
- Air gun blasts have been shown to suppress reproduction, increase the risk of death and disease, and cause behavioral and physiological stress in endangered great whale species such as the blue whale.²²



Deepwater Horizon explosion in 2010

The public is strongly against offshore drilling

Opposition to offshore drilling is widespread among the public, municipalities, businesses and local, state and federal officials of both parties.²³

- Over 300 municipalities and more than 2,000 elected officials have formally opposed offshore drilling and seismic testing.²⁴

Communities are taking action

The Trump administration has proposed a new plan that would dramatically expand offshore oil and gas drilling, opening nearly all of America's coastal waters to oil and gas development.²⁵ Communities are taking action to protect our oceans and coastal areas from drilling:

- Citizens are opposing the administration's proposed plan by engaging in public comment periods. More than 1.35 million comments have been submitted opposing the proposal.²⁶
- City councils along the Atlantic coast have passed resolutions against offshore drilling.²⁷



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