

Exxon Valdez 1989

The Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred on 24th March 1989 at Prince William Sound, Canada, while the ship was travelling to Long Beach, California.

The ship was being captained by Joseph Hazelwood when it ran aground at Bligh Reef and created the second largest oil spill in the history of the USA. It is estimated that up to 750, 000 barrels of oil were spilled into the ocean.



The oil spill is estimated to have caused the deaths of up to 250, 000 sea birds and 3, 000 sea otters. The spill is said to have reduced the number of fisheries, amount of tourism and amount of recreational sports. This disaster cost \$300 million to sort out!

The blame for the disaster was placed on the shipping company who owned the tanker. It said there were not enough crew (people) manning the ship and this meant they were tired and not paying full attention to what was happening. They also noted that the tanker did not have a collision avoidance system which would have alerted the crew they were about to crash.



Deepwater Horizon 2010



The Deepwater Horizon oil spill started on the 24th April 2010 and ran until 15th July 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico near the Mississippi River delta. It occurred when the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform became detached from the well it was taking oil from after an explosion which killed 11 people.

Teams were unable to place a cap over the oil flow and so oil continued to flow out of the well and into the sea for 87 days. This resulted in 4.9 billion barrels of oil spilling into the sea and makes it the largest accidental marine spill in history.

The spill resulted in mutations in the wildlife found there including causing around 50% of the prawns being found without eyes or eye sockets. The deaths in animal and plant communities is far too high for experts to even predict. It is estimated the cost to BP, local tourism, the cost of jobs etc may reach well over \$130 billion dollars.

The blame for the disaster fell on BP, the company who owned the oil rig, who are said to have known that the pressure the oil was under was three times higher than it should have been. This made extracting the oil easier but made the rig unstable.



Gemma Hortop

