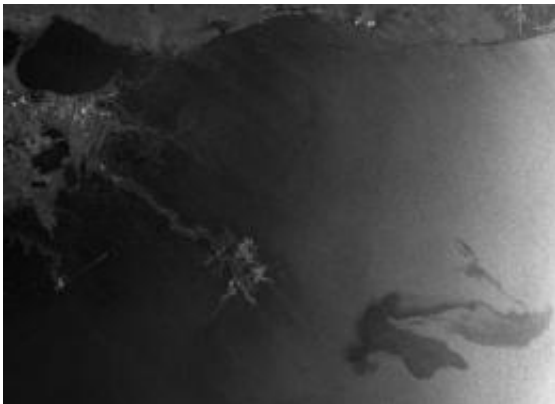


ESA's Envisat monitors oil spill

April 27 2010



This Envisat radar image captures the oil that is spilling into the Gulf of Mexico after a drilling rig exploded and sank off the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi on April 22, 2010. The oil spill is visible as a dark gray whirl in the bottom right. Envisat acquired this image from its Advanced Synthetic Aperture Radar on April 26 at 15:58 UTC. Credit: ESA

These ESA Envisat images capture the oil that is spilling into the Gulf of Mexico after a drilling rig exploded and sank off the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi, USA, on 22 April.

In the black-and-white radar image the [oil](#) spill is visible as a dark grey whirl in the bottom right, while in the optical image it is seen as a white whirl. The Mississippi Delta is at top left, and the Delta National Wildlife Refuge extends out into the Gulf.

Officials report that about 1000 barrels of oil a day is escaping from a

damaged oil well located 1.5 km under the drilling rig. By yesterday afternoon, the spill was covering an area some 77 km long and 63 km wide.

The US Coast Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the London-based BP and oil industry experts are attempting to stem the leak and prevent it reaching the Gulf Coast and the fragile ecosystem there.



This is an Envisat optical image of the oil spill (visible as a white whirl on the right) in the Gulf of Mexico. The image was acquired from the Medium Resolution Imaging Spectrometer (MERIS) on April 25, 2010, at 16:28 UTC. Credit: ESA

In order to observe the clean-up efforts, the US Geological Survey, on behalf of the US Coast Guard, requested satellite maps of the area from the International Charter Space and Major Disasters. The Charter is an international collaboration, initiated by ESA and the French space agency, CNES, to put satellite remote sensing at the service of civil protection agencies and others in response to natural and man-made disasters.

Envisat acquired these images from its Advanced [Synthetic Aperture Radar](#) (black and white) and Medium Resolution Imaging Spectrometer on 26 April at 15:58 UTC and on 25 April at 16:28 UTC, respectively.

Provided by European Space Agency

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