

Deepwater Horizon disaster could have billion dollar impact: new study

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The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010 will have a large economic impact on the U.S. Gulf fisheries.

A new study published in the *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences (CJFAS)* says that over 7 years this oil spill could have a \$US8.7 billion impact on the economy of the Gulf of Mexico. This includes losses in revenue, profit, and wages, and close to 22 000 jobs could be lost.

"Unlike the visually obvious and immediate effects on birds and mammals, the effects of oil on fisheries can be more difficult to detect, though they are no less devastating," says lead author U. Rashid Sumaila. "Oil and hydrocarbons are taken up by plankton and other surface-dwelling species that link to aquatic [food chains](#)." This in turn affects the [fishing industry](#).

The Deepwater Horizon, a [British Petroleum oil rig](#), exploded in the Gulf of Mexico on 20 April 2010. By August 2010 it was estimated that it had leaked an estimated 4.9 million barrels of oil (780 million L), making it the largest accidental marine oil spill in US waters. In comparison, the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 amounted to less than 0.5 million barrels. This study estimates the economic impact this spill will have on commercial and recreational fisheries and mariculture in the Gulf of Mexico.

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Dyck, A., Huang, L., Cheung, W., Jacquet, J., Kleisner, K., Lam, V., McCrea-Strub, A., Swartz, W., Watson, R., Zeller, D., and Pauly, D. 2012. Impact of the Deepwater Horizon well blowout on the economics of US Gulf fisheries. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, 69. doi: [10.1139/F2011-171](https://doi.org/10.1139/F2011-171) . Available Open Access at www.nrcresearchpress.com/doi/full/10.1139/F2011-171

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