

Authorities eye reopening of goo-struck California beaches

May 29 2015, by Christopher Weber



A cleanup crew collects balls of tar that washed ashore in Manhattan Beach, Calif. on Thursday, May 28, 2015. Popular beaches along nearly 7 miles of Los Angeles-area coastline are off-limits to surfing and swimming after balls of tar washed ashore. The beaches along south Santa Monica Bay appeared virtually free of oil Thursday morning after an overnight cleanup, but officials aren't sure if more tar will show up. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

Crews scouring 7 miles of Southern California beaches had scooped up

truckloads of mysterious oily goo Thursday and the area might be clean enough to reopen for the weekend, authorities said.

Workers scooped up about 30 cubic yards of tarry balls and patties that began washing ashore Wednesday.

"There appears to be no new [tar balls](#) or anything additional to the amount that we have recovered thus far," U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Charlene Downey said.

The stretch of coast from Manhattan Beach to Redondo Beach that was closed to swimmers, surfers and beachgoers could reopen early Friday morning if the sand and sea are given an all-clear, Downey said.

Someone dropped off an oil-covered loon at a wildlife center in Manhattan Beach, but it's not clear exactly where the bird or the oil came from, the Coast Guard said. No other wildlife problems have been reported.

U.S. Coast Guard and state officials said samples of tar and water would be analyzed to identify where the material originated, but it could take days to get the results.

There is a refinery and offshore oil tanker terminal nearby but the Coast Guard did not find a sheen from a possible spill after the tar started to accumulate.

Nothing has been ruled out, including last week's coastal oil spill that created a 10-square-mile slick about 100 miles to the northwest off the Santa Barbara County coast.

Lifeguards chased a handful of surfers out of the water Thursday but beach life was otherwise normal for people exercising, playing

volleyball, skating and riding bikes along the shore.



A cleanup crew collects balls of tar that washed ashore in Manhattan Beach, Calif. on Thursday, May 28, 2015. Popular beaches along nearly 7 miles of Los Angeles-area coastline are off-limits to surfing and swimming after balls of tar washed ashore. The beaches along south Santa Monica Bay appeared virtually free of oil Thursday morning after an overnight cleanup, but officials aren't sure if more tar will show up. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

"I got a couple waves in and then they came by again and told me to get out," said Scott Berk, who regularly surfs at Manhattan Beach.

He said surfers are used to seeing bits of tar in the water and on the shore from natural seafloor seepage but the amount that came in

Wednesday was concerning.



Lifeguards ask beachgoers to leave the beach after balls of tar washed ashore in Manhattan Beach, Calif. on Thursday, May 28, 2015. Popular beaches along nearly 7 miles of Los Angeles-area coastline are off-limits to surfing and swimming after balls of tar washed ashore. The beaches along south Santa Monica Bay appeared virtually free of oil Thursday morning after an overnight cleanup, but officials aren't sure if more tar will show up. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

"I hope they clean it up quickly," he said.

Public health officials told people to avoid contact with the water, wet sand or any material that washed up in the area. They warned that contact with petroleum products can cause skin irritation and result in long-term health problems.



A crew cleans up a beach after balls of tar washed ashore in Manhattan Beach, Calif. on Thursday, May 28, 2015. Popular beaches along nearly 7 miles of Los Angeles-area coastline are off-limits to surfing and swimming after balls of tar washed ashore. The beaches along south Santa Monica Bay appeared virtually free of oil Thursday morning after an overnight cleanup, but officials aren't sure if more tar will show up. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)



A cleanup crew collects balls of tar that washed ashore in Manhattan Beach, Calif. on Thursday, May 28, 2015. Popular beaches along nearly 7 miles of Los Angeles-area coastline are off-limits to surfing and swimming after balls of tar washed ashore. The beaches along south Santa Monica Bay appeared virtually free of oil Thursday morning after an overnight cleanup, but officials aren't sure if more tar will show up. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)



Contaminated bags of sand and oil are loaded onto a track loader in Manhattan Beach, Calif., on Thursday, May 28, 2015. Popular beaches along nearly 7 miles of Los Angeles-area coastline are off-limits to surfing and swimming after balls of tar washed ashore. The beaches along south Santa Monica Bay appeared virtually free of oil Thursday morning after an overnight cleanup, but officials aren't sure if more tar will show up. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Authorities eye reopening of goo-struck California beaches (2015, May 29) retrieved 20 March 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2015-05-authorities-eye-reopening-goo-struck-california.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.