

Even modest oil exposure can harm coastal and marine birds

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Many birds and other wildlife die following an oil spill, but there are also other potential long-term effects of oil exposure on animals. In a recent *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* study that examined blood samples from birds present in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 and 2011 following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, even birds with small amounts of oil present on their feathers experienced problems related to their red blood cells.

The findings show that even modest oil exposure can cause problems for individual birds and [bird populations](#).

"We found that oil-induced injury to birds is far more wide-reaching than previously suspected," said Dr. Jesse Fallon, lead author of the study. "Even birds with relatively limited exposure to oil from the Deepwater Horizon spill sustained damage to circulating [red blood cells](#) and had evidence of anemia, which can adversely affect reproduction and reduce survival."

More information: Jesse A. Fallon et al, Hematological indices of injury to lightly oiled birds from the deepwater horizon oil spill, *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/etc.3983](https://doi.org/10.1002/etc.3983)

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