

No 'significant' harm from Galapagos diesel spill: reserve

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Volunteers spread absorbent cloths on a beach in Puerto Ayora, Ecuador, to absorb oil spilled by the sinking of a small boat near one of the Galapagos islands.

A diesel spill off one of Ecuador's ecologically sensitive Galapagos

islands caused no "significant" damage, the protected nature reserve said Sunday.

A scuba diving boat sank off Santa Cruz island Saturday with 2,000 gallons (7,600 liters) of diesel and four crew on board. No one was hurt.

Measures taken by authorities and resident volunteers have managed to prevent "significant impacts on the island and marine ecosystems of the archipelago," the Galapagos National Park (PNG) said in a statement.

Environmental officials will continue monitoring the situation, it added.

Located in the Pacific about 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) off the coast of Ecuador and famous for their giant tortoises, the Galapagos islands are a protected wildlife area and home to unique species of flora and fauna.

The archipelago was made famous by British geologist and naturalist Charles Darwin's observations on evolution there.

The Galapagos marine reserve, in which industrial fishing is prohibited, is the second-largest in the world.

More than 2,900 marine species have been reported within the archipelago, which is a Natural World Heritage Site.

In 2019, a barge carrying a small amount of diesel fuel sank off another Galapagos island, San Cristobal, causing a small spill and insignificant damage.

In 2001 an Ecuador-flagged vessel carrying 240,000 gallons of fuel sank off San Cristobal. That spill caused environmental damage and harmed several marine species.

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