



**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES**



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OIL SHEEN SOUTH OF PETIT BOIS ISLAND

BILOXI, Miss. – Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality staff on an observational flight with the Mississippi National Guard Thursday morning observed an oil sheen about 2.1 miles due south of Petit Bois Island. This is a patch of sheen that has been migrating in a northwesterly direction over the past few days. While the sheen is decreasing in size through evaporation and vessels skimming the water, some of the clear substance is expected to have an impact on Petit Bois, and perhaps Horn Island, within the next 24 hours. Patches of small tar balls and very weathered, degraded oil are behind that sheen about 8 to 10 miles south of the island and also may land on the islands.

Vessels of Opportunity and BP contractors are currently on the scene working to break up the sheen including using absorbent boom. When oil sheen reaches a shoreline it typically evaporates, and that is expected to be the case if it reaches Petit Bois or Horn Islands.

The patches of tar balls and weathered oil are being skimmed and corralled to keep them out of the passes and out of the Mississippi Sound. Skimming is used to remove streams of emulsified oil, tar balls, and tar patties. Currently three task forces, comprised of Vessels of Opportunity and contractors, are focused on this activity. One task force is working the cut between Petit Bois and Horn Island and south, a second task force is on the cut between Petit Bois and Dauphin Island and south, and a third is south of the islands focusing on heavier oil. There are approximately 540 Vessels of Opportunity doing tasks today including Sentinel Duty in which boat owners patrol the passes into the Mississippi Sound and the areas southward to observe and to report any materials. Some boat owners are working boom patrol closer to shore, and others are about 10 miles south of the Barrier Islands with pads and boom.

MDEQ and the Department of Marine Resources will continue to monitor by aerial surveillance and on the surface the movement of the materials and the activities in the Gulf to ensure every possible action is being taken to guard the passes and keep any oil out of the Mississippi Sound.

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