

Portions of the Gulf are So Toxic that Dolphins, Fish, Crabs, Stingrays and Other Animals are "Trying to Crawl Out of the Water" (<http://www.washingtonsblog.com/2010/08/gulf-water-so-toxic-dolphins-fish-crabs.html>)

On Friday, Inter Press Service [reported](http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=52552) (<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=52552>):

Danny Ross, a commercial fisherman from Biloxi... said he has **watched horseshoe crabs trying to crawl out of the water, and other marine life like stingrays and flounder trying to escape the water** as well. He believes this is because the water is **hypoxic**. ...

David Wallis, another fisherman from Biloxi... [said] **"I've seen crabs crawling out of the water in the middle of the day.** This is going to be affecting us far into the future."

This has been a common occurrence since BP started spilling oil into the Gulf.

The Post Chronicle [noted](http://www.postchronicle.com/news/breakingnews/article_212317366.shtml?ref=rss) (http://www.postchronicle.com/news/breakingnews/article_212317366.shtml?ref=rss) on August 12th:

Some local fishermen say they are seeing strange behavior by marine life -- mullets, crabs and other creatures which normally stay well under water have been sighted congregating on the surface -- and they relate this to the spill.

"It looks like all of the sea life is trying to get out of the water," said Alabama fisherman Stan Fournier. "In the 40 years I have been on these waters I've never seen anything like this before."

The Advocate-Messenger [pointed out](http://www.amnews.com/stories/2010/07/31/loc.616440.sto) (<http://www.amnews.com/stories/2010/07/31/loc.616440.sto>) on July 31st:

Besides potentially maintaining higher levels of toxicity, the oil trapped in the water column is also suffocating the ocean, causing radical drops in oxygen levels never before seen, [Monty Graham, a biological oceanographer specializing in plankton at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab on the coast of Alabama] said.

Following the oil and methane spill, Graham's measurements of oxygen levels in the waters where he studies plankton dropped to two to three times lower than normal, to a level so low most animals cannot tolerate it.

That suffocating effect is why all kinds of sea animals have been showing up in greater and greater numbers, closer and closer to shore — they can't breathe in their normal habitats anymore.

And AP [wrote](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37738626/) (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37738626/>) in June:

Dolphins and sharks are showing up in surprisingly shallow water just off the Florida coast. Mulletts, crabs, rays and small fish congregate by the thousands off an Alabama pier. Birds covered in oil are crawling deep into marshes, never to be seen again.

Marine scientists studying the effects of the BP disaster are seeing some strange — and troubling — phenomena.

Fish and other wildlife are fleeing the oil out in the Gulf and clustering in cleaner waters along the coast. But that is not the hopeful sign it might appear to be, researchers say.

The animals' presence close to shore means their usual habitat is badly polluted, and the crowding could result in mass die-offs as fish run out of oxygen. Also, the animals could easily get devoured by predators.

"A parallel would be: Why are the wildlife running to the edge of a forest on fire? There will be a lot of fish, sharks, turtles trying to get out of this water they detect is not suitable," said Larry Crowder, a Duke University marine biologist.

Tragically, when sea animals crowd into shallow water in an attempt to escape pollution, they can quickly use up all available oxygen.

As the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection [writes](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/newsrel/2010/10_0082.htm) (http://www.state.nj.us/dep/newsrel/2010/10_0082.htm):

The warmer water is the less dissolved oxygen it is able to hold. If the fish schooled very tightly in shallows very close to shore for any reason, they may have simply used up all the oxygen that was available to them and died."

Update: Bloomberg [reports](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-08-23/gulf-of-mexico-s-fish-beachings-may-be-increasing-because-of-bp-oil-spill.html) (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-08-23/gulf-of-mexico-s-fish-beachings-may-be-increasing-because-of-bp-oil-spill.html>) on August 23rd that scientists confirm that this is related to the oil spill:

BP Plc's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico may be exacerbating a natural phenomenon that causes fish, crabs, eels and shrimp to swarm the shoreline to escape oxygen-depleted sea waters.

Called "jubilees" by locals because of the opportunity to scoop up seafood in buckets, they typically appear during the summer along the Gulf Coast. This year, scientists say jubilees have occurred in open water for the first time, raising concern that low-oxygen areas are expanding because of the more than 4 million barrels of oil BP's Macondo well leaked into the Gulf.

Low oxygen in the water because of oil and methane from the BP spill contributed to a "jubilee-like effect" in late June off the coast of Fort Morgan, Alabama, at the mouth of Mobile Bay Monty Graham, a senior marine scientist at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab in Alabama, said in a telephone interview. Catfish, shrimp, crab and flounder piled up along an offshore sandbar, until the sharks moved in, Graham, 45, said.

"Most of us believe it had something to do with the oil," said Robert Shipp, 67, chairman of the Marine Sciences Department at the University of South Alabama. There was a "consensus" among faculty at the University of South Alabama and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab that oil played a part in the event, which was "quite different" from the naturally occurring jubilees in the Gulf's Mobile Bay, Shipp said.

"Oil residues on the bottom and in the water columns could exacerbate and make worse this phenomenon," Kent Mountford, an environmental historian who has studied estuarine ecology for 46 years, said in a telephone interview. Mountford, 73, works for Cove Corp., an environmental consultancy, in Lusby, Maryland.

4 COMMENTS:



[Majia's Blog](http://www.blogger.com/profile/04941091700194936591) (<http://www.blogger.com/profile/04941091700194936591>) said...

The public apathy about this ongoing catastrophe and the degree of denial by so many is overwhelmingly depressing. It is like watching a friend slowly and deliberately commit suicide while not being able to help them...



[windcatcher](http://www.blogger.com/profile/0147262922157397747) (<http://www.blogger.com/profile/0147262922157397747>) said...

The fate of Nature is the fate of Mankind.



Helpless from World Banksters and BP Genocide.



[A Southern Gentleman](http://www.blogger.com/profile/02262063524394846703) (<http://www.blogger.com/profile/02262063524394846703>) said...



Reading this calls to mind the Mobile Bay Jubilee. Mobile Bay is connected to Gulf waters and so technically part of the Gulf, but the hypoxia in this case is not man made.



In summer the conditions are sometimes right to cause decaying matter on the seafloor to rapidly deplete the water of oxygen. This rapidly formed hypoxic zone causes local marine life to flee to shallower waters, often beaching itself en masse. A person can literally walk along the beach and pick up all the crabs and shrimp they can carry, in some cases filling up tubs and pickup trucks.

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[20635](#) The jubilee event is natural and does not ultimately threaten the existence of these animals but only drives them into shallower water for a while. They happen in the early morning and the animals are back in their habitats by the late afternoon.

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3) Shrimpers have known for years to focus their efforts on the edges of the Gulf dead zones. The animals that are forced out of their habitats tend to cluster near their former homes.

As I understand it, hypoxic zones are reversible given time and proper environmental stewardship. There was one in the Black Sea that disappeared after the Soviet collapse caused fertilizer usage to plummet there.

For more info on the Mobile Bay Jubilee: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_Bay_jubilee

[jbpeebles \(http://www.blogger.com/profile/11386620564536871255\)](http://www.blogger.com/profile/11386620564536871255) said...

I'm afraid BP/Fedgov's eager to make this go away will mean big trouble for those dependent upon the Gulf. Since the earliest days of the response, the facts--especially those to which BP/Fedgov are privy--are subject to PR spin and perception control.

First: The Gulf as people have known it is no more. It's a polluted body of water. Whether the cause is hypoxia, oil, benzene or dispersants--which aren't mentioned in this post--doesn't matter. The bottom line is that much of the Gulf can no longer support life.

Opening fishing grounds is a big mistake. The response is moving to wrap up phase, based on the myth that "we can't find the oil although we tried to find it--we really did" response by BP/Fedgov. (Their rosy 75% dissipating has run afoul of many of their own scientists, raising issues of muzzling and, again, PR).

We saw these media manipulations occur back when they wouldn't admit how much was leaking (even as reports of huge undersea plumes were surfacing.) The strategy: if the quantity isn't acknowledged, it isn't there. How Orwellian. We see this now also, with oil buried under the sand emerging.

Now they're ignoring the dispersant problem by blaming low oxygen levels (while in fact the dispersant mixed with oil is highly toxic. 2 million gallons of Corexit 9500 that have been--and are continuing to be--sprayed on the Gulf, much of it underwater and at night. remember the spraying of the toxin came due to a need to reduce surface oil, hiding the scope of the real leak...and its liability applied on a per barrel basis.

Much of the Gulf is nothing more than a giant toxic waste dump right now. We've failed to be vigilant. I've been quoting Fredrick Douglass: "Find out what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong that will be imposed on them."

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