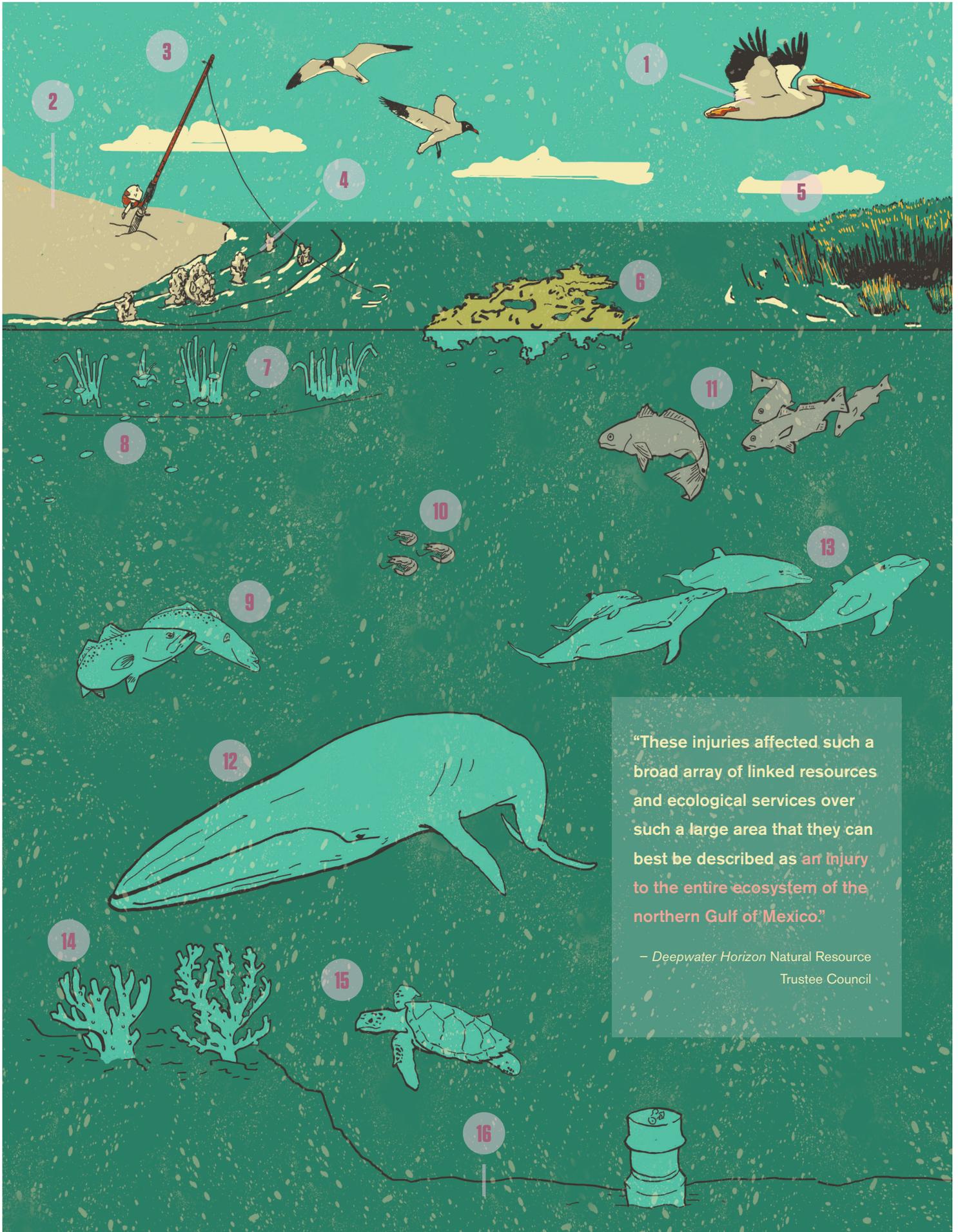


What We Know Now About the BP Oil Disaster



“These injuries affected such a broad array of linked resources and ecological services over such a large area that they can best be described as an injury to the entire ecosystem of the northern Gulf of Mexico.”

— Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Trustee Council

The following is a small sampling of the impacts described in the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Draft Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

1. Birds

While the Trustees acknowledge that this is a very conservative estimate, the total number of birds killed by the BP oil disaster is from 56,100 to 102,400 birds. At least 93 species of birds across all five Gulf Coast states were exposed to oil.

2. Beach and Dune Habitat

BP oil covered at least 1,300 miles of the Gulf coastline, including 600 miles of beach, dune and barrier island habitat.

3. Lost Human Use

The public lost 16,857,116 days of boating, fishing and beach-going experiences. The total loss of recreational use of the Gulf due to the disaster is worth \$528 million to \$859 million.

4. Oysters

Between 4 and 8.3 billion oysters are estimated to have been lost. Over three generations (minimum recovery time), the dead oysters would have produced a total of 240 to 508 million pounds of fresh oyster meat.

5. Salt Marsh

Louisiana lost up to 53 percent of its salt marsh plants across 350-721 miles of shoreline. In Louisiana wetlands, erosion rates approximately doubled along at least 108 miles of shoreline. The effect lasted for at least 3 years.

6. Sargassum

Sargassum, a floating seaweed that provides habitat for young fish and sea turtles, was exposed to oil, which may have caused the loss of up to 23 percent of this important habitat.

7. Seagrass Habitat

Seagrass beds covering a total area roughly the size of 206 football fields (272 acres) were lost from the time of the disaster through 2012.

8. Larval Fish

The Trustees estimated that 2-5 trillion larval fish were killed. The loss of larval fish likely translated into millions to billions of fish that would have reached a year old had they not been killed by the BP oil disaster.

9. Sea Trout

Several of species of sea trout, including the spotted (or speckled) sea trout, were severely impacted by the disaster. An estimated 20-100 billion sea trout larvae were killed as a result of the disaster.

10. Shrimp

The growth of young white, pink and brown shrimp was dramatically affected by oil. The total loss of shrimp production over 2010 and 2011 due to oiling is estimated at more than 2,300 tons.

11. Red Drum

The growth of young red drum fell by up to 47 percent along marsh shorelines in Louisiana that were persistently oiled since 2010, and an estimated 700 tons of red drum were lost. Reduced red drum production persisted through 2013 and is expected to continue.

12. Whales

While nearly all of the species of whales in the footprint of the oil have demonstrable, quantifiable injuries, the most hard-hit was the Bryde's whale. With only about 50 Bryde's whales left in the Gulf, roughly half of these animals were exposed to oil—and nearly a quarter were killed. It is unclear if Bryde's whales will be able to recover.

13. Bottlenose Dolphins

The number of bottlenose dolphins in Barataria Bay and Mississippi Sound—two areas particularly affected by the disaster—is projected to decline by half. The populations are expected to take 40-50 years to recover. In the 5 years after the oil disaster, more than 75 percent of pregnant dolphins observed within the oil footprint failed to give birth to a viable calf.

14. Coral Reefs

The footprint of injury to mid-depth coral reefs is just over 4 square miles. These areas along the continental shelf edge, known as the Pinnacles, showed extensive damage to both the coral colonies and the reef fish associated with them. The larger ecological functions of this habitat were very likely impaired.

15. Sea Turtles

All five of the Gulf's sea turtles are either threatened or endangered. It is estimated that somewhere between 61,000 and 173,000 sea turtles—of all ages—were killed during the disaster. For the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle, this equals 10-20 percent of the average number of nesting females each year, which would have laid approximately 65,000 - 95,000 additional hatchlings.

16. Deep Seafloor

The footprint of BP oil on the Gulf seafloor around the wellhead is an area more than 20 times the size of Manhattan (over 770 square miles). An additional 3,300 square miles may have been affected.

