

Oil in the Ocean Biology Projects



[Alvin and Sentry explore the deep Gulf](#)

Deepwater Horizon, 2010

Principal Investigator: [Tim Shank](#)

In December 2010, R/V *Atlantis* carried the submersible *Alvin* and autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) *Sentry* to the Gulf of Mexico to help scientists examine deep-sea habitats near the source of the oil spill. Use of the two vehicles in tandem to identify and target sites of interest on the seafloor represented a first for deep-water exploration.

[Collecting Deep-sea Sediment Flux](#)



Deepwater Horizon, 2010

Principal Investigator: [Chris German](#)

In 2009, a group of researchers studying deep-water animals and habitats in the Gulf of Mexico set out two instruments to collect samples of the carbon-rich debris that rains down from above and that serves as food for many of the animals that live on the bottom. Both were scheduled to take their final sample on July 2 so WHOI researchers quickly mobilized to place new instruments on the seafloor and extend their record of conditions in the Gulf.

[From Plankton to Oil Droplets](#)



Deepwater Horizon, 2010

Principal Investigator: [Cabell Davis](#), [Nick Loomis](#)

WHOI scientists deployed a specially designed camera system to identify and measure the tiny plants and animals that live in the open ocean. At the same time, they discovered that their instruments are also well suited for measuring the size and distribution of oil droplets in the water column. -This information is important to model the oil plume more accurately.

[Biological Responses to Oil and Dispersant](#)



Deepwater Horizon, 2010

Principal Investigator: [Ann Tarrant](#)

Based on a long history of work with the starlet anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*), scientists from WHOI and elsewhere have begun watching for and modeling genetic and physiological responses in the organism to the oil and the dispersants used to fight the spill.

[Dead Zones and Microbial Response to Oil](#)



Deepwater Horizon, 2010

Principal Investigator: [Ben Van Mooy](#)

Water samples from the Gulf are helping scientists understand how different microbes in the ocean respond to oil spills. They found that although oil-eating microbes were limited by a lack of phosphorous in the water, they were able to consume oil at a much higher rate than expected.

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