

Black Sea Oil Spill 400 Times Bigger Than Claimed, Russian Scientists Say

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Beach in South Ozereevka **Pavel.Shulekin (CC BY 3.0)**

An oil spill off the coast of the Black Sea is at least 400 times larger than originally claimed, Russian scientists [said](#) Wednesday, citing satellite images.

A Russian-Kazakh consortium [said](#) Monday that 12 cubic meters of oil had spread over 200 square meters on Saturday when a Greek-flagged tanker was taking on oil at a terminal in southern Russia. The Caspian Pipeline Consortium's statement added that the situation was “normalized” by Sunday and did not pose a threat to local wildlife or humans.

But the Russian Academy of Science’s (RAN) space research institute said a satellite image taken on Sunday showed the size of the oil spill to be almost 80 square kilometers, with a 19-kilometer oil slick stretching from the shore to the open sea.

“The spill is much larger than claimed,” it said in a statement on its website.

World Wildlife Federation (WWF) Russia experts [say](#) the spill has spread across 94 square

kilometers and caused billions of rubles in damages. The environmental group warned that the oil has already reached the shores of national parks and other protected areas and that most of the oil had dissolved in the water, posing a threat to living organisms and beaches.

“The events are unfolding according to the worst-case scenario,” WWF Russia’s fuel and energy policy director Alexei Knizhnikov told The Insider news website.

Video published to social media showed a visible layer of oil on the water's surface at a dolphinarium near the resort city of Anapa. Staff can be seen installing sorbent booms to protect the dolphins.

Embed:

В дельфинарии под Анапой на поверхности воды обнаружили нефтяные пятна после разлива топлива в Новороссийске. Чтобы они не навредили животным, сотрудники дельфинария установили в акватории ленты сорбирующего бона <https://t.co/UMQNZypz5D> [pic.twitter.com/vYFeeGxKql](https://t.co/vYFeeGxKql)

— Дождь (@tvrain) [August 11, 2021](#)

RAN said its space and ocean researchers continued analyzing satellite and meteorological data “for a detailed analysis of the oil spill emergency.”

In comments to the state-run RIA Novosti news agency, RAN oceanography expert Andrei Kostyanoy suggested that the oil slick could [disappear](#) by Thursday due to hot weather and depending on the type of oil that spilled.

The CPC, which transports oil from Kazakhstan, blamed the leak on an equipment breakdown at the Yuzhno-Ozereyevka sea terminal near the town of Novorossiysk.

Russia’s state environmental watchdog Rosprirodnadzor has been ordered to assess the scale of the damage of the Black Sea spill.

AFP contributed reporting.

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