

## Sea of Sorrow: The Crude Reality of Oil Spills

Oil spills have horrible consequences for oceans, causing extensive pollution and harming **marine** life. When oil is released into the water, it spreads rapidly, forming an oil slick that blocks sunlight and kills marine plants and algae. This disrupts the delicate balance of the ocean ecosystem and affects the **food chain**.



The impact of oil spills goes beyond the surface. Oil sinks and contaminates water columns and the ocean floor, damaging different marine organisms like fish, shellfish, and corals. Marine animals suffer from skin and **organ** damage when exposed to the oil, while seabirds lose their ability to fly due to oil-coated feathers.



The long-lasting effects of oil spills harm marine habitats. The toxic components of oil persist for years, accumulating in organisms and causing health problems. This leads to smaller populations, affecting biodiversity and communities dependent on fishing and tourism.

Efforts to clean up oil spills are challenging, making prevention crucial. Stricter regulations, improved safety measures, and increased investment in clean energy alternatives are essential to prevent oil spills and protect our oceans. By taking steps to prevent oil spills, we

can keep marine environments safe and reduce the destructive impact of oil spills.

Let's experiment with different materials to see how easy or hard it is to clean up an oil spill. See if you can find out which material cleans up an oil spill the best.

1. Pour a 1/2 cup of oil into your shallow dish of water.
2. Experiment with cotton balls, paper towels, sponges, and coffee filters to help you fill out the table below.

| Material Used  | Describe how effective each material was at cleaning up the water. |
|----------------|--|
| Cotton Balls   |  |
| Paper Towels   |  |
| Coffee Filters |  |
| Sponges        |  |