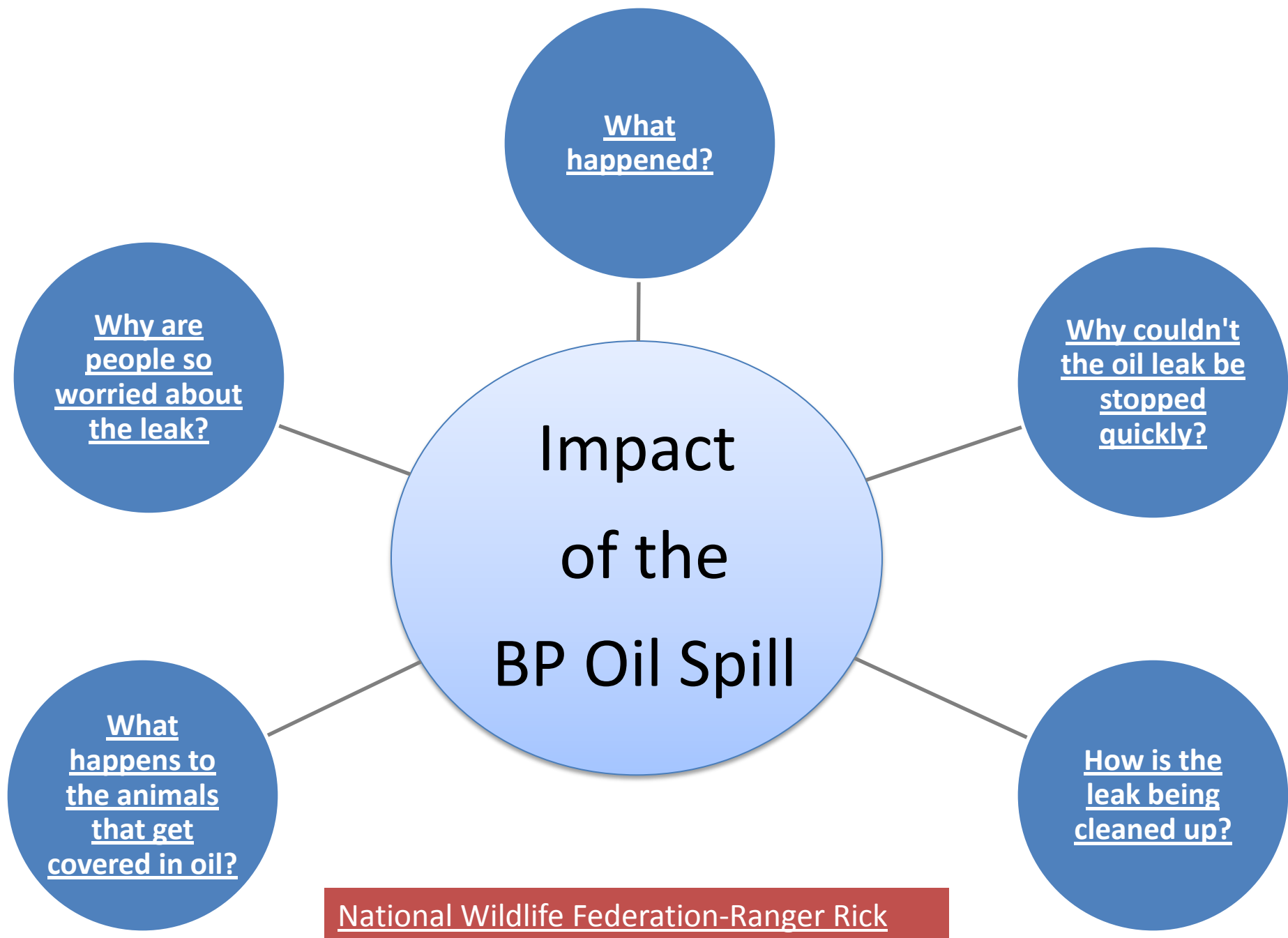


The BP Oil Spill In The Gulf of Mexico April 20, 2010

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What happened?

Lots of oil wells were drilled under the Gulf of Mexico. At every deep-water well, one pipe carries all the oil from the well in the sand of the Gulf up to the platform floating at the top of the water. The oil is collected and shipped to land to be used.

On April 20, a new well was finished recently. Somehow the gas and oil escaped from the well rose to the surface.

Why are people so worried about the BP oil spill?

The oil is was coming out as a dark, thick, sticky substance. The liquid is floating to the top. It pollutes the water that has a sickening fumes that are dangerous to be around. Oil clouds are forming in the water that has an unknown number of damage it will do. Millions of gallons of oil have polluted the Gulf so far. As more and more oil leaks from the well, it spreads farther and farther. The slick has now washed up on the coast, and into wetlands in some areas. This shows a major threat to plants and animals that live there.

How is the oil being cleaned up?

1. Chemical Dispersants. Chemicals are added to the oil to disperse into smaller chunks. Small organisms in the water can then break apart the oil more easily. Unfortunately, these chemicals can be hurtful to fish and different wildlife, and they can make the small oil bits spread even wider. Scientists have already found out that large clouds of oil bits under the surface. They fear that this oil will kill many of the tiny sea creatures that animals depend on for food.
2. Skimming. Boats suck up the oil from the water but only works in calm waters.
3. Burning. Oil is sometimes burned off but it pollutes the air.
4. Separating. Soon, 32 machines that can clean the oil out of water will be used. They will suck the water and oil in the machines, spin the mixture, put on a boat to be separated, and be pumped back in the water. The machines will allow it's self to clean to 6 million gallons of water a day. But, more oil is still leaking out so, no one knows how much the machines can take in.

Why couldn't the oil spill be stopped?

Workers tried to cover the main leak by covering it with a giant dome. They hoped it would trap all the leaking oil and suck it up with ships. It failed because it got clogged with ice, so they put a smaller dome but it only trapped a little bit. They replaced it with a tighter one and were hoping for it to capture most of the oil or all of it.

Another solution was that they placed a pipe into the side of the broken blowout preventer. This tube is collecting oil and natural gas, and carrying both to the surface. There, the gas is being burnt away, and the oil is being taken to the beach.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ANIMALS THAT GET COVERED IN OIL?

The birds that stop, the oil gets into their feathers when they try to dive

Do you have an opinion?

The BP Gulf Oil Spill Blog

