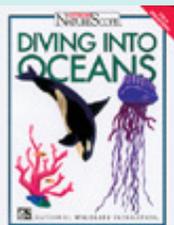


Oil Spill Activity (Easy)

Materials:

- Aluminum pie plate
- Salt
- Water
- Vegetable oil
- Food coloring
- Cotton
- Straw
- Fake fur
- Feathers
- Detergent



Purpose: To study the effect of an oil spill and ways to clean it up.

What is an oil spill? An oil spill is a mistake or carelessness that causes the oil to spill on water or land.

What happens to spilled oil in water? The oil in water spreads, dissolves, settles, moves, and evaporates.

Ask students to predict how easily the oil may be separated from the water and to suggest materials that could be used to do it.

Using materials available, such as cotton, straw, fake fur, feathers, detergent, or other materials that the students want to experiment with, try to remove the oil from the water.

Observe the reaction that the oil has to the cleaning efforts. Record what happens.

- Does the oil spread out?
- Does it cling to the cleaning material?
- Can the oil be contained in a small space?

Keep track of the amount of time it takes to clean up the oil spill using the different methods.

Questions:

- Which techniques seemed to work the best?
- What effect did detergent have on the oil?
- What happened when a feather was used?
- What might this tell us about the effects of oil spills on birds?

Fire is another method of cleaning up an oil spill.

- Where does the oil go when it burns?
- What kind of problems might this cause?
- When oil reaches the shoreline, what other problems might occur?