

**For Immediate Release:** August 4, 2010

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## **NWF: Reported Progress Encouraging, But Gulf Oil Disaster Goes On**

WASHINGTON, DC (August 4, 2010) – The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association (NOAA) announced today that about half of the petroleum in the Gulf oil disaster has been captured, evaporated, burned or skimmed, with another quarter being naturally or chemically dispersed beneath the Gulf’s surface. Additionally, BP is reportedly making progress in permanently sealing the gusher itself.

Dr. Bruce Stein, National Wildlife Federation associate director for wildlife conservation and global warming, said today:

“The National Wildlife Federation is encouraged by reports of progress in permanently sealing the Gulf oil gusher and at removing oil from the Gulf’s surface. But even with so much oil captured or evaporated, there remains the equivalent of multiple Exxon Valdez disasters on and below the Gulf’s surface, fouling the Gulf Coast’s coastal habitats and hurting its wildlife. Already in August, hundreds more birds and dozens more endangered sea turtles have been rescued or found dead. That’s in addition to the thousands of birds, turtles, and dolphins already impacted since the disaster began.

“It’s troubling that reports are lumping dispersed oil still lurking under the water’s surface with oil that’s been captured, contributing to the sense that the oil that’s been swept under the rug is no longer a problem. Scientific evidence shows this oil is far from gone – in fact, scientists at Tulane University have found across the Gulf signs of an oil-and-dispersant mix under the shells of tiny blue crab larvae, creatures that are part the base of the Gulf’s food chain.

“Our experience with previous oil disasters like the Exxon Valdez shows the full impact of an oil disaster may not be apparent for months or years to come. It wasn’t until four years after the Valdez disaster began that local herring stocks collapsed – and more than two decades later, neither that critical food source for people and wildlife nor the jobs that depended on them have recovered.

“We agree with NOAA’s conclusion that we don’t know the full extent of the impacts of this oil disaster on the Gulf’s ecosystems or the communities that depend on it. It would be irresponsible to draw conclusions about the Gulf oil disaster’s full impacts with so many questions still unanswered.”

Yesterday, the National Wildlife Federation released an open [letter \(PDF\)](#) signed by nine top scientists urging Attorney General Eric Holder and BP CEO Robert Dudley asking for full public release of all scientific data related to the Gulf Coast oil disaster. While some data has been released, other information such as species-specific data on bird oilings and deaths remains unavailable. In an effort to obtain more complete data on bird injury and deaths related to the spill, the National Wildlife Federation has also filed a [Freedom of Information Act request \(PDF\)](#) with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

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*The [National Wildlife Federation](#) is America's largest conservation organization inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.*

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