



WHAT
HAPPENED

The explosion
aboard the
Deepwater
Horizon
happened on
April 20, 2010.

The BP oil spill that threatened coastal Louisiana and its way of life started when the Macondo well, about 55 miles off the Louisiana coast, blew out, killing 11 men as BP and Transocean crews were closing off the well.



Workers in protective suits comb the beach at Dauphin Island, Ala., on May 14, 2010.



The safeguards on the well didn't work as they were intended, and oil from the well flowed into the Gulf of Mexico for 87 days. It took several more weeks to completely seal off the well. It was the largest oil spill in history, with the federal government estimating that 4.9 million barrels of oil spilled into the water.

Though skimmer ships, booms and oil dispersant was used, the oil still damaged and destroyed wetlands and wildlife habitat from Florida to Texas. While hundreds of Louisiana residents were hired to help clean up the oil slicks in the water and on land, thousands more lost their water-dependent livelihood.

An unknown number of birds, shrimp, turtles, dolphin and fish died, but scientists believe the impact of the spill on fisheries and wildlife will not be fully understood for decades.

In 2016, BP agreed to a \$20 billion settlement after a judge found the company was "grossly negligent," in the incident. The company has said its costs for the accident will top \$53 billion. Louisiana is set to receive \$6.8 billion of the settlement, much of which will be used toward the state's coastal restoration efforts.



A brown pelican covered in oil on the beach at East Grand Terre Island.

The Deepwater Horizon continues to smolder the day after the explosion, April 21, 2010.