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One year later, Tech finds no evidence of BP oil spill in seafood

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Posted: Apr 20, 2011 6:44 PM CDT

By [Christie Post](#) - bio | [email](#)

LUBBOCK, TX (KCBD) - One year later we remember the start of the largest oil spill in U.S. history. Last summer the leak finally stopped after 87 days.

Experts said we aren't seeing oil on the surface anymore, but the question remains where exactly did the oil go? And many wonder if the gulf will ever fully recover to the point before the spill.

"It certainly just didn't go away some of it is being decomposed and metabolized by bacteria. We had some evidence in deeper water that bacteria was decomposing it and breaking it down," said Dr. Ron Kendall, Texas Tech Director at the Institute of Environmental & Human Health.

People around the country and those living near the BP oil spill remember the images of the oil pouring into the ocean. More than 1,000 miles of shoreline and animals were covered in oil. Booms were placed to capture it on the surface and dispersants were spread to break down the oil that eventually merged with the deep sea water.

"One of the real complex issues that unfolded was the oil sinking or not. And we did believe that a lot of it did sink," said Kendall.

Dr. Ron Kendall, a director and professor at Texas Tech, was key in researching the effects of the oil spill on different species. He said it could be decades before they have direct evidence of long term effects. But they do know that spawning, mixed with fishing and the devastation that's already occurred will impact the lifecycle.

"We saw the acute situation a lot of dead birds. And we saw people trying to clean up the marsh being exposed to it. There is a lot of antidotal evidence coming out that there is a lot of delayed sickness from exposure to the oil," said Kendall.

Despite evidence of the oil still being present, Dr. Kendall said the gulf is naturally recovering.

"UV light will degrade a lot of the chemicals in the oil as well as wave action and oxygen being available for that decomposition," said Kendall.

The Department of Environmental Toxicology at Texas Tech has tested blue crabs, oysters and shrimp from the gulf for petroleum related hydrocarbons.

"And we are not finding any kind of contamination in the seafood. That suggests that

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organisms are not accumulating these products if they are still present," said Todd Anderson, Professor at the Department of Environmental Toxicology.

That's good news for restaurants in Lubbock, like the Shrimp Galley where last year there was a lot of uncertainty for their product.

"Speculation and fear was driving up the prices dramatically," said John McVey, Shrimp Galley Owner.


One year later, customers are back and they said it's the best spring they've ever had.

"We're getting really high quality seafood and the flavor is great. And some of my customers have commented the shrimp and oysters have never tasted better," said McVey.

Experts said the oil spill is a complex situation still unfolding. And it could take up to 20 years, like the Exxon Valdez oil spill for the science to be revealed once everything is played out in court.

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