

Oil spill effects far-reaching



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Scientists at Texas Tech's Institute of Environmental and Human Health say their research may come in handy for the recent oil spill. Right now they're testing how contaminants similar to oil affect sea turtle cells.



Local ecotoxicologists say the slick is pouring into one of the world's most sensitive ecosystems.

"We could be wiping out a whole generation of sea turtles in the Gulf Coast," says Ron Kendall, Ph.D., and director of the Institute of Environmental and Human Health. It's not just endangered species. He says all wildlife are at risk.

"If you live on the Gulf Coast or not, if you like seafood from of Gulf, it's going to impact us for a long time," says Kendall.

He says a third of the nation's seafood comes from Louisiana alone. This means the cost of fresh seafood here will rise. And that's not all. There's already been a spike in oil futures.

According to Lubbock Gas Prices.com the average retail gas prices rose 6.9 cents per gallon last week, to \$2.68 for regular unleaded.

"Part of that may be coming from the Gulf Coast problem," says Charles Bolton, co-owner of Bolton Oil Company. "You know, part of it may be coming from turn-around that refineries have typically this time of year."

To put in perspective the size of the spill, imagine drawing a line from Lubbock to the New Mexico to illustrate the width, then up to Amarillo to show the length. And oil is still spewing. Even long after it stops, researchers like Kendall will be working to evaluate the ecological impact of the environmental disaster.

We're told this is one of the only facilities in the nation right now studying sea turtles at this level.