

**AMORGOS**

AMORGOS, Oil Pollution Incident, Lungpan, Taiwan, 14th January 2001 - Update 6th July 2001

The final stage of shoreline cleanup was completed toward the end of May to the satisfaction of the Taiwanese authorities and disposal of the last of the recovered liquid oil and oily debris was completed around the end of June. There remains some restoration work to be done on access tracks to some shoreline areas. ITOPF continues to work closely with the authorities and relevant parties on the assessment and resolution of various claims and an environmental monitoring programme is underway.

6 July 2001

AMORGOS, Oil Pollution Incident, Lungpan, Taiwan, 14th January 2001 - Update 16th March 2001

In spite of stormy conditions, the AMORGOS remains stable and there are no reports of any further serious leakage of oil. The vessel's owners have engaged a diving contractor to attend the wreck. Their attempts to recover oil remaining on board have been hampered by rough seas, but on 6th March some 500-600 litres were removed from cargo hold number 3. A further 4.2 tonnes were removed on 12th March and around 20 tonnes on 16th March. A small amount of oil was washed out of the cargo hold during strong tides on 10th March, but this was dealt with using sorbent pads.

The weather conditions have also hampered cleanup efforts. Storms earlier in the month remobilised oil remaining in channels in the central section of the shore and carried it to channels to the south that had previously been cleared. In places, strong sunlight and high daytime temperatures are also causing thin coatings of oil to dry and harden on the rocks. In areas exposed to high wave energy, natural cleaning is occurring, but away from the surf zone and towards the upper reaches of the channels, the wave/water energy is lower and natural flushing is much less evident.

Some 400 people are presently engaged on shoreline clean-up. The majority have been sieving oil that has already been collected to remove debris that would otherwise block the transfer pumps. Between them, they have been handling up to 32 tonnes of oil each day. This operation will be completed around 17th March and the final stage of clean-up will then commence. Tests to evaluate the most appropriate clean-up techniques for the situation are currently being arranged.

The removal of oily debris from beneath the amenity area viewpoints, which overlook the affected shore, has now been largely completed. A wood chipper arrived on site on 11th March and has been used to chip some of the large pieces of timber that have been collected.

Substantial progress has been made with the removal of oil and oily debris from the site. 80-90 cubic metres of debris is being removed each day and 18-20 tonnes of liquid oil.

Mr Richard Santner is presently on-site.

Click [here](#) to view a selection of photographs from the scene.

20 March 2001

AMORGOS, Oil Pollution Incident, Lungpan, Taiwan, 14th January 2001 - An Update

Military personnel withdrew on 16th February, having manually cleared most of the heavy accumulations of oil between the rock crevices and moved much of the oversized oiled driftwood into piles at the back of the beach. On 17th February about a hundred workers from the local villages took over the clean-up operation under the direction of a spill contractor appointed by the vessel's owners. Local workers currently number some 300 and are continuing to focus efforts on transferring oil and oiled driftwood and debris to storage areas at the back of the beach and manually removing accumulations of floating oil from the water between the rock channels, as weather conditions permit. As at 27th February, about 10-15% of the oil recovered from the sea had been moved from the shoreline to a temporary storage area at the top of the cliff awaiting final disposal. The first loads of solid waste have been taken to an incinerator and arrangements for recycling fluid oil are being finalised.

Oil sheens are still spreading from the tanks damaged at the time of the grounding, but dissipate within about 500m of the wreck site, before reaching shore. Some of the cargo of iron ore fines is also visible in the water but is being quickly dispersed in the strong currents. The Taiwanese authorities remain concerned about the status of the broken vessel and the possibility of further oil being released. Salvage experts are currently assessing the best way forward.

Mr Richard Santner of ITOPF is on-site.

2 March 2001

AMORGOS, Oil Pollution Incident, Lungpan, Taiwan, 14th January 2001

Whilst en-route from India to North China, the bulk carrier AMORGOS, laden with 60,000 tonnes of iron ore, suffered engine failure and grounded on rocks off the southern tip of Taiwan. An estimated 1000 tonnes of the fuel oil on board at the time of the grounding has since spilt into the sea. Measures to mitigate the loss of oil from the vessel were taken by Smit Tak, an international salvage firm engaged by the vessel's owner. They completed oil removal operations on 4th February. A total of about 220 tonnes of IFO 180 was removed from the vessel's breached or damaged tanks. A maximum of some 200 tonnes of IFO 180 now remains on board distributed among 6 tanks. These tanks are reportedly sound and the probability of a further significant release of oil is low, though minor leakage is occurring.

Approximately 4-5km of shoreline within the Kenting National Park has been oiled to varying degrees. The Kenting National Park is a scenic and ecologically important area that draws thousands of tourists. It is well known for its limestone caves, natural monsoon forests and coastal tropical rainforest and supports an estimated 2,200 different plant species, some of which are rare and unusual. Approximately 200 bird species also inhabit or migrate through the park.

Much of the affected shoreline consists of jagged fossilised coral rock, pitted with channels. The first kilometre north of the Oluanpi headland is most heavily affected but some channels further away also contain substantial amounts of oil. Of the 1000 tonnes or so that has been spilt, some will have been lost through dispersion and evaporation, but much has reached the shoreline. The oil has now emulsified, due to the constant wave/water mixing, increasing the overall quantity of material to be recovered.

Both the salvage and the response operation have been hampered by poor weather conditions. Though the rough seas and high winds have promoted the natural dispersion of the oil, they have hindered the mobilisation of manpower and equipment. In the initial stages of the response, problems were further exacerbated by the difficulties of finding workers during the Chinese New Year holidays.

Owing to the severe weather, response at sea has been restricted to the manual recovery of oil using hand nets and scoops. Local fishermen have been employed in this respect. A launch vessel with dispersants remained on stand-by until 3rd February, but was demobilised once the risk of a further substantial release of oil had been minimised through Smit Tak's oil removal operations. No dispersant was applied prior to this due to the storm conditions prevalent when the oil was first spilt.

Shoreline clean-up operations began on 25th January. 37 labourers and supervisors were initially deployed, though this number was increased to 150 by the beginning of February. Cleaning consists of the manual collection of thick pools of oil within the rock channels. The shore terrain is very rough and it has not been possible to use machinery directly along the rock areas. The collected oil has therefore been moved in buckets along a human chain to a staging area of storage tanks at the back of the shore amongst the rocky cliffs. The oil has then been transferred to a storage site at the top of the cliffs using screw pumps and a network of PVC piping. It will ultimately be removed to the China Petroleum Corporation's facilities at Kaoshiung for final disposal.

The local workforce has now been joined by several hundred soldiers, who arrived on-site on 11th February to assist with the manual clean-up operation. On 13th February some 62 tonnes of oily waste were collected, bringing the total to some 300 tonnes as at 14th February.

Dr Karen Purnell of ITOPF is currently on-site. She has replaced Chantal Gu nette and Richard Santner who were earlier in the field.

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