

0. SUMMARY of the DEEPWATER HORIZON DISASTER - Story Preface

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2. OIL - HOW IS IT FOUND?
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5. EXPLOSION at DEEPWATER HORIZON
6. FAILURE of the BLOWOUT PREVENTER
7. LIFE and DEATH at the OIL RIG
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**9. SUMMARY of the DEEPWATER HORIZON DISASTER**

Photo of the burning Deepwater Horizon, following its massive explosion on 20 April 2010, posted by LTZ240 at "Steve's Digicams." The picture was taken by an unnamed photographer who sent the image to LTZ240 "to keep me updated." [Picture posted on 23 April 2010.](#) No known copyright. Click on the image for a full-page view.

Like the *Deepwater Horizon* itself, with its many moving parts, the disaster which unfolded at the rig during April of 2010 includes many different issues. This summary asks some of the key questions and provides the answers by linking to witness testimony and official investigations.

**Why Did the Explosion Occur?**

**Did Any Problems Contribute to the Disaster?**



**What Caused Confusion over Who Was in Charge?**

**What Was It Like to Experience the Blowout?**



**Who Is Mike Williams (Mark Wahlberg in the Film)?**

**Who Is Andrea Fleytas (Gina Rodriguez in the Film)?**

**Who Is Jimmy Harrell (Kurt Russell in the Film)?**

**How Did BP Respond to Jason Anderson's Call for Help?**

**Why Did Crew Members Jump into the Gulf from the Rig?**



**Why Did the Blowout Preventer Fail?**

**What Caused Oil to Surge into the Gulf of Mexico?**

**What Caused Deepwater Horizon to Sink on April 22, 2010?**



**Who Are the Eleven Heroes Who Died Fighting the Disaster?**

**Why Did It Take So Long for Survivors to Reach The Shore?**

**What Were Survivors Forced to Do before Calling Families?**

**After 40 Sleepless Hours, What Did Survivors Sign?**

**How Did the Coast Guard, and Others, Fight the Fire?**

**How Did Deepwater Horizon Cause Pollution in the Gulf?**

**How Much Oil Did the Macondo Well Release into the Gulf?**

**What If a Gusher is 5,000 Feet below the Water's Surface?**

**What Happened to Birds As a Result of the Spill?**

**What Happened to Fragile Habitats as a Result of the Spill?**

**Where Could the Oil Have Traveled after the Spill?**

**Chemistry of Life: What Makes Oil?**

**Why Does the Gulf of Mexico Have So Much Oil?**

**How Do We Get Oil from the Gulf of Mexico?**

Credits:

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SUMMARY-of-the-DEEPWATER-HORIZON-DISASTER-Deepwater-Horizon-Disaster-in-the-Gulf>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SUMMARY-of-the-DEEPWATER-HORIZON-DISASTER-Deepwater-Horizon-Disaster-in-the-Gulf>

Media Stream

## Deepwater Horizon on Fire and Disabled

This picture was taken after *Deepwater Horizon's* explosions (on April 20, 2010) but before the final massive explosion which caused the rig to sink on April 22, 2010.

An oil-industry expert, who uses the name "LTZ240" at "Steve's Digicams" website, posted this image. He tells us about [the source of this picture](#), which was taken after the rig's initial explosions (on April 20, 2010) but before a final massive explosion caused the rig to sink (on April 22, 2010):

*These pictures were being sent to me by other oilfield workers that wanted to keep me updated...my younger brother was 30 miles away and watching it burn and sink...I was just posting them as I received them to allow others to see what an oilfield blowout looks like. This was a catastrophic failure and they had about 2 seconds to respond and it takes us that long to even think...it ignited and killed them or took all the oxygen away before they could get out...*

*Click on the image for a full-page view.*

*Photo of the burning Deepwater Horizon, following its massive explosion on 20 April 2010 but before its fatal explosion on 22 April 2010, posted by LTZ240 at "Steve's Digicams." The picture was taken by an unnamed photographer who sent the image to LTZ240 "to keep me updated." [Picture posted on 23 April 2010](#). No known copyright.*

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-on-Fire-and-Disabled>



## Deepwater Horizon's Blowout Preventer - Underwater

Photo and description of Deepwater Horizon's blowout preventer - located underwater after it sank during the April 22nd explosion - online, courtesy U.S. Coast Guard.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-s-Blowout-Preventer-Underwater>



## Deepwater Horizon Victim - Jason Anderson

Quoted passages from [Bloomberg](#).

Image online, courtesy Transocean's condolences web site.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-Victim-Jason-Anderson>



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## Deepwater Horizon - Oil Surges into the Gulf

Screenshot from video monitoring leaking oil at the Macondo Well Site in the Gulf of Mexico. Online via BP (British Petroleum).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-Oil-Surges-into-the-Gulf>



## Deepwater Horizon Eleven Who Died

Images of the Deepwater Horizon Eleven online via Transocean's condolences website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-Eleven-Who-Died>



### Deepwater Horizon Victim - Dale Burkeen

Image online, courtesy Transocean's condolences web site.

Quoted passages from the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Clarion-Ledger*.

Passages quoting Burkeen's cousin, from *WTOK, News 11*.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-Victim-Dale-Burkeen>



### Oiled Brown Pelicans - Grand Isle, Louisiana

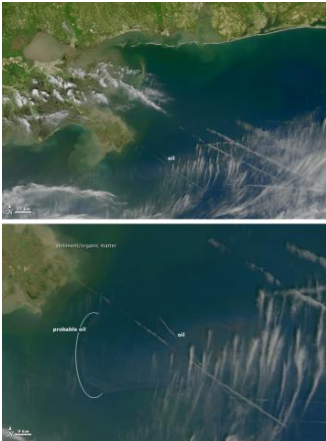
Photo by IBRRC (International Bird Rescue Research Center), online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

Photo taken on 4 June 2010, at 06:31:17 GMT.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oiled-Brown-Pelicans-Grand-Isle-Louisiana>



### Deepwater Horizon - Expanding Slick Nears Fragile Habitats

NASA image by Norman Kuring, Ocean Color Team, Goddard Space Flight Center. Image online, courtesy NASA's Earth Observatory web site.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-Expanding-Slick-Nears-Fragile-Habitats>



### Mike Williams on Deepwater Horizon - 60 Minutes

Video clip from the *60 Minutes* interview with Mike Williams, aired on 16 May 2010. Clip online, courtesy *60 Minutes* and CBS Channel at YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Mike-Williams-on-Deepwater-Horizon-60-Minutes>



### Deepwater Horizon on Fire - U.S. Coast Guard Video

U.S. Coast Guard Video - 100421-G-XXXXL-003 Deepwater Horizon fire. Clip online, courtesy USGS.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Deepwater-Horizon-on-Fire-U.S.-Coast-Guard-Video>



### Working on the Gusher in 5,000 Feet of Water

Video of work at Mississippi Canyon 252, in the Gulf of Mexico, online courtesy UAC Joint Information Center, Robert, Louisiana.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Working-on-the-Gusher-in-5-000-Feet-of-Water>



### Animation - Potential Dispersal Pathway of the Oil Spill

Animation by [National Center for Atmospheric Research \(NCAR\)](#) and its collaborators. Online, courtesy NCAR.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Animation-Potential-Dispersal-Pathway-of-the-Oil-Spill>