



## BP's Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill at the Oil Drum Overview - Especially for New Readers - Discussion

Posted by [Gail the Actuary](#) on May 3, 2010 - 10:19am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

Tags: [blowout](#), [bp](#), [deepwater horizon](#), [gulf of mexico](#), [oil spill](#) [[list all tags](#)]

*This is a post we plan to update and keep up during the time the oil spill is an issue. See the **Discussion** section at the end for comments about the proposed post.*

Trying to follow a complex ongoing story like the **oil spill** on a blog like The Oil Drum is difficult, so I thought I would put together some pointers and useful links, especially for new readers. In this, I include

- [Drumbeat](#)
- [Oil Drum articles closely related to the Oil Spill](#)
- [Oil Drum background articles, helpful to newcomers](#)

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### Drumbeat

The place most readers start is [Drumbeat](#). Leanan puts up a list of news articles in every day. Many will be relevant to the oil spill and responses to it. The comments below Drumbeat will also include many useful discussions and links. For most people, starting with today's Drumbeat is useful.

If you want to look at prior Drumbeat dates, an easy way to find them is to look through the [Archives](#). If you are particularly interested in comments by a particularly knowledgeable commenter JOHN DOE, you can click on that person's name, and be led to a page that has as one of its choices "Comments by JOHN DOE", and from there can see further comments by the same person.

### Oil Drum Posts Closely Related to the Oil Spill

We have run a number of posts that are related to the Oil Spill. These, listed from the most recent to the oldest, are as follows:

4. [Progress on the Gulf oil leak and comments on cementing and well completion](#) by [Heading Out](#) (Dave Summers) - May 3

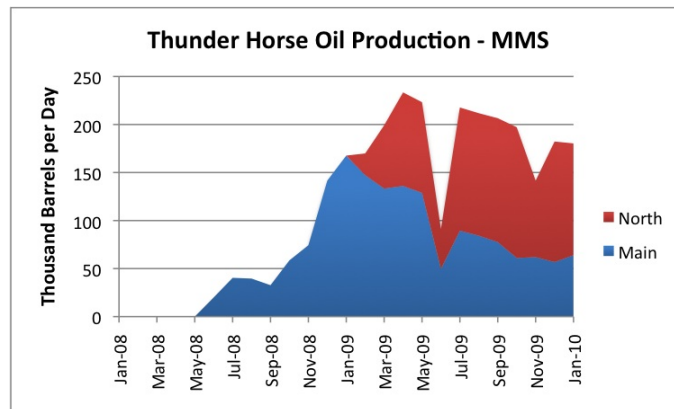
Background technical information on cementing pipes and well completion, plus discussion of how these seem to be an issue in the Deepwater Horizon blowout.

3. [Tech Talk: Revisiting Oil Well Pressures and Blowout Preventers after BP's Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill](#) by [Heading Out](#) (Dave Summers) - May 2

Post by a recently retired university professor, describing some of the "ins" and "outs" of oil well pressure and blowout preventers. In the second half of the post, Heading Out talks about how this relates to some recent questions that have been raised with respect to how the current blowout took place, and what can be done to stop the leaking.

2. [BP's Thunder Horse to Under-Perform in the Wake of the Deepwater Horizon Blowout?](#) -Guest post by [Seismobob](#) (Glenn Morton) - April 30

One question of interest is, "If we do all this deepwater drilling, is it really possible to get a reasonable quantity of oil out?" Hopefully, we will be able to run a number of posts trying to examine this question. The April 30 post was the first such post. Based on the analysis Seismobob did, it appears that at least in this example, production is not going nearly as well as planned--suggesting that deepwater oil reserves may be overstated, and costs of production may be much higher than oil companies have planned on.



1. [The Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Some Background and What It Means](#) by [Gail the Actuary](#) (Gail Tverberg) - April 28 Excerpt:

It seems to me that the great depth and attendant pressures, and the learning curve that goes working within these new parameters, probably contributed to the initial leak, and is contributing to the difficulties that are now occurring in stopping the leak.

This particular well was not an important one--one source said it had economic importance only because of its proximity to a platform which was already in the area. The issues are more the possible environmental damage and the political fallout that could come from the accident. Unfortunately, most of the "easy oil" is gone. The oil that remains all has some challenges--but the fact of the matter is that the world economy cannot run without oil. So there are no easy answers.

## Oil Drum General Background for New Readers

Most of our transportation fleet runs on oil products (gasoline or diesel). In addition, many of our roads are paved with asphalt, which is an oil product. Oil is essential for our current food supply system, since farm equipment uses diesel to operate, transportation of food (and refrigeration during transport) requires oil products, and oil is used in irrigation, fertilizer production and transport, and in the manufacture of insecticides and herbicides.

If there are oil shortages, it will affect the economy--either through recession or high prices--but not necessarily both simultaneously--so the impact may look like an *oil demand* problem, as much as an *oil supply* problem. Even if we were able to put up an infinite number of wind turbines or nuclear plants tomorrow, these would not really substitute for oil, so would not solve our oil-related problems, although wind, nuclear, and other energy approaches might have benefits of other types.

Because of this oil problem, we are facing a serious predicament, with no obvious solution. On The Oil Drum, we discuss our predicament; analyze possible mitigating actions; and look at what the future may hold, based on insights from history and from various sciences.

For those just getting started, here are a few articles that may be of interest:

## **The Oil Supply (or Oil Demand) Problem**

[There is Plenty of Oil, but . . .](#)

[Our Energy Supply, Some Basics](#)

[World Oil Production Forecast - Update November 2009](#)

## **Financial Problems which are likely to be Connected to Oil Supply Issues**

[Delusions of Finance: Where We May be Headed](#)

[Tipping Point Paper](#)

[Peak Oil and the Financial Crisis](#)

## **Insights on Where We May be Headed**

[The Failure of Networked Systems](#)

[Dennis Meadows - Economics and Limits to Growth: What's Sustainable?](#)

[The dark side of coal - some historical insights on energy and the economy](#)

## **Technical posts related to oil supply**

See [Tech talks](#) by Heading Out (Dave Summers)

## **Other posts**

We have posts on many other topics, including [biofuel](#), [wind](#), [nuclear](#), [solar PV](#), [electricity](#), and many other subjects. Google search can provide help in finding posts.

We also have posts related to the general subject of sustainability. Many of these are in our [Campfire](#) section. We also have many posts on related to Net Energy and Energy Return on Energy Invested. These are generally found in the [Net Energy](#) section.

## **Discussion**

We are thinking about leaving up a version of this post up for new readers during the time the Oil Spill is an issue. (It would be an additional post with a short header, listed above Drumbeat.) I would plan to update the list of oil spill articles with new Oil Drum oil spill articles, as new ones are published.

The article would probably have comments disabled, and this last **Discussion section** would be removed after this first post.

I know the idea of running a list of important recent press articles, and an ongoing summary of where we are now, similar to that that we did during the hurricane season, is appealing, but I am not sure that we have the staff to maintain such an endeavor. I am also not sure such a format would be very accessible to our very diverse readership, as the story grows in size and complexity. As a practical matter, readers are going to be able to read much more than 2,000 words or so at a time. They will be put off by an overlong document, and such a document will be difficult to keep organized. We will also not be able to do all aspects of the story equally well--may have to slight ecological impacts for example, since this is not our area of expertise.

Hopefully, from time to time, we will be able to run articles giving an overview of where we are at a given point, and maybe articles on good sources to go to for informations. Such articles would then be added to the list of articles shown on this post, which would be available for readers to review.

Any thoughts about this idea?



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