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Two years later, BP oil spill still affects Gulf way of life

Sharon Abercrombie | May. 8, 2012 Eco Catholic

Two years after the massive BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the news remains grim on numerous fronts, reports *Mother Jones* in an April 2012 series of environmental impact articles. Besides eyeless shrimp, toxic beaches and dead dolphins, Gulf oysters [1] are now in trouble, and people who swim in the Gulf are picking up carcinogenic PAH compounds on their skin.

A team of scientists, led by Dr. Peter Roopnarine of the California Academy of Sciences, has learned that oysters now have higher concentrations of the heavy metals found in crude oil than they did before the spill. Roopnarine also discovered signs of metaplasia, a condition that occurs when tissues are transformed in response to stress, in the mollusks. The scientists don't yet know what these effects could have on high-level consumers in the food chain, which includes people who love Louisiana's famous Po' Boy sandwiches, but previous studies show heavy metal pollution combined with warmer temperatures are especially deadly in oysters.

This, of course, is bad news for the oyster fisherfolk, who are still struggling to earn a living. A year before the spill, they added $300 million to Louisiana's economy.

In another story, *Mother Jones* reports [2] that the chemical antidote BP uses to disperse all the oil is not working. Instead, microbes are having a tougher time digesting the oil. Swimmers can't see the visible effects, but tests reveal that cancer-causing agents are penetrating their skin.

This is all very scary stuff. And as one letter-writer remarked: It's not true that because oil is natural, it is therefore harmless.

The one glimmer of hope in the scenario: If enacted, the RESTORE Act [3] would deliver 80 percent of BP's Clean Water Act fines to coastal communities and beach area restoration.

In other environmental news, Organic Consumers Association urged people Tuesday to be part of a "Money Bomb on Monsanto" [4] and contribute to California's right to know [5] GMO citizens' balloting initiative. The initiative would require GMO labeling on food products. Since California is the eighth-largest economy in the world, the initiative, if passed, would force manufacturers to stop contaminating food with GMOs.

The consumer group hopes to raise $1 million by May 26. That money will be matched by Mercola.com, the largest alternative health website in the world, and leading organic companies Nature's Path, Lundberg Family Farms, and Eden Foods.

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Links:
[1] http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2012/04/heavy-metal-oysters

[2] http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2012/04/microbes-arent-eating-oil-gulf-beaches-thanks-corexit-dispersant
[3] http://gulfoilspill.audubon.org/citizens-guide-restore-act
[4] http://organicconsumers.org/moneybomb1.htm
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