



# Deadly combo may lie ahead

An active Atlantic hurricane season could worsen effects of Gulf oil spill

VENICE, La. — As I drive down Hwy. 11 in Plaquemines Parish, the damage from Hurricane Katrina is still evident five years later, with condemned buildings and homes dotting the landscape.



Tuesday marked the opening of hurricane season, which the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasts will be "active to extremely active" due to above-average water temperatures in the Atlantic and a weakening El Nino.

With this ominous prediction comes heightened fear of another storm, and for the citizens of Plaquemines Parish, a large storm now could mean a wave of oil in addition to the devastation that a hurricane can bring.

The majority of the oil from the BP spill currently lies offshore and what has hit the coast remains concentrated on the barrier islands and outer edges of the marsh. One hurricane would likely drive the oil into the back marshes, breach levees and coat the land.

No amount of boom could prevent a storm surge like a hurricane could bring — and with no solution for capping the well, the oil is likely to flow through nearly all of hurri-

cane season.

In the meantime, piles of boom and oil absorbent material line the docks of Venice, La., ready to be deployed to protect the shoreline. Oil clean up workers fill the small town, working to clean up what is already coating the coast and floating on the surface of the water.

### Magnitude is huge

With the oil reaching the shores of Mississippi and Alabama this week, it is clear that the magnitude of the spill is huge. With one shift of the wind, Florida's coasts will be covered. The majority of the oil lies below the surface in enormous plumes that we are only beginning to understand.

A large hurricane would not only affect how the oil would impact the shore, but it would move large quantities of oil out in the open water and potentially accelerate the rate at which it enters the loop current, which then flows into



Cleanup costs for the catastrophic Gulf oil spill have topped \$123 million. That's more than the \$121 million spent on the Exxon Valdez spill.

GAEILIN ROSENWAKS/QMI AGENCY

### Another snag

ED STODDARD  
Reuters

VENICE, La. — BP hit a snag in its latest effort to curb the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

The company's latest plan is to siphon off some of the oil by cutting away what is left of the ruined offshore well's leaking riser pipe, then lower a containment cap over the remaining well-head assembly, enabling BP to funnel crude to the surface. However, the diamond-tipped saw being used to cut through the pipe became stuck. BP employed robots on the seabed to free it, a difficult task a mile underwater.

Tar balls and other oil debris from the giant, fragmented slick have now reached Alabama's Dauphin Island, parts of Mississippi, and were less than 10 miles from Florida's northwest Panhandle coast.

The region's vital seafood and tourism industries are at risk from America's biggest oil spill ever. Florida, entering the busy beach season, is ramping up reconnaissance efforts and preparing to deploy more booms, as well as conduct coastal cleanups. Officials are preparing for oil landfall that could come as early as Friday.

BP, now facing a criminal investigation, has lost one-third of its market value — about \$67 billion (46 billion pounds) — since the April 20th oil rig explosion that killed 11 and triggered the mile-deep gusher.

the Gulf Stream.

Time will tell what will happen during the coming months of the hurricane season and we can hope that, if indeed, we have the predicted "above normal" season, the Gulf Coast will not be the tar-

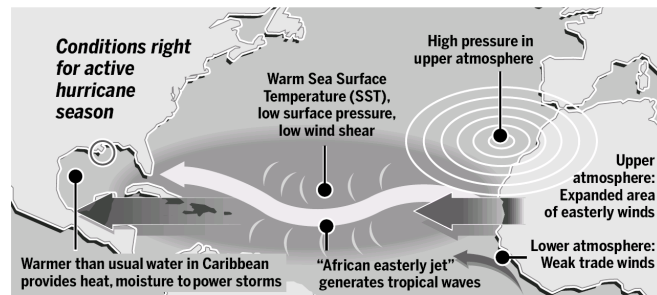
get of the storms.

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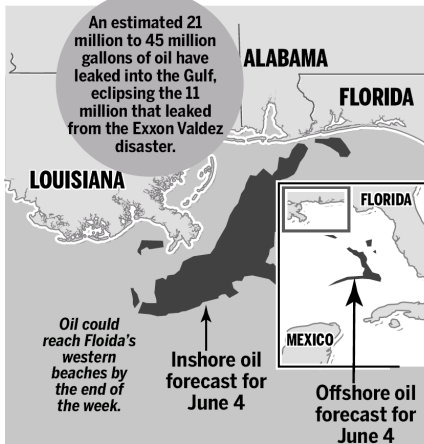
Piles of boom and oil absorbent material line a Venice, La., dock.

## PREDICTING ATLANTIC HURRICANES

Forecasters are predicting the most active Atlantic hurricane season since 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated the same area of the coast that is now trying to cope with the oil slick.



2010 PROJECTIONS (70% probability)	Average	2005
Named storms	14-23	11
Hurricanes (top winds of 120km/h or more)	8-14	6
Major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5; winds of at least 180km/h)	3-7	2



SOURCE: GRAPHIC NEWS