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ADVISORY ON THE OIL SPILL IN GUIMARAS STRAIT

An oil spill due to the sinking of MT Solar 1 carrying about 2 million liters of bunker oil reached the coast of the Island Province of Guimaras on August 13, 2006. The oil spill has raised concerns on its effects on the coastal resources of Guimaras.

The severity of the impact of an oil spill depends on a variety of factors, including characteristics of the oil itself. Natural conditions, such as water temperature and weather, also influence the behavior of oil in aquatic environments. Various types of aquatic habitats have different sensitivities to oil spills.

In open water, fish have the ability to swim away from a spill by going deeper in the water or farther out to sea, reducing the likelihood that they will be harmed by even a major spill.

Unlike swimming fishes, aquatic plants and animals that live closer to shore in areas that are covered and exposed by the tides such as young crabs, mussels, oysters, clams, seaweeds, burrowing organisms, and nursery stages of fish suffocate when exposed to large amounts of oil.

Fishing gears are damaged upon contact with bunker oil such that fishing activities are now confined to open waters free from oil slick.

Results of the analyses conducted by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center - Aquaculture Department (SEAFDEC-AQD) on various fish species caught by fisherfolk from Guimaras Strait and Panay Gulf and landed in Buenavista, and Jordan, Guimaras showed that all samples were found to be negative for bunker oil.

Based on the stated results, the public is therefore informed that fish caught in open waters in Guimaras Strait and in Panay Gulf are safe for human consumption.


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