

Mauritius Oil Spill

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The island of Mauritius has declared a 'state of environmental emergency' after a grounded vessel began leaking tonnes of oil into the Indian Ocean. Satellite images, which show the dark slick spreading in the nearby waters, are being used to monitor the ongoing spill.

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The Japanese-owned ship, MV Wakashio, ran aground at **Pointe d'Esny, an important wetland area** in late July. It is a **cargo ship** operated by Japanese company Mitsui OSK Lines. It was on its way from China to Brazil when it ran aground on the reef. A massive clean-up operation has been launched from the shore since oil began leaking, with thousands of local volunteers heading to the eastern side of the island nation to help. The way the leakage and the break in the ship are increasing, there is a huge probability that this ship will break into two. And there is still around 2,500 metric tons of fuel on the tanks of the ship.

The operator said that about **1,180 metric tons of oil had leaked from the vessel's fuel tank, with about 460 tons manually recovered from the sea and coast. The ship was carrying about 3,800 tons of very low sulphur fuel oil and 200 tons of diesel oil.** The oil has seeped into **Mahebourg Lagoon**, a scenic spot known for its turquoise waters. Rejuvenation efforts have been ongoing in this area since 2001, when the government banned sand extraction from the lagoon. Marine life had returned and corals were slowly growing before the spill.

The spill is close to the Blue Bay Marine Park reserve and a number of popular tourist beaches. Damage to the boat has since caused it to leak out polluting waste into the surrounding area. **Thousands of species around the pristine**

lagoons of Blue Bay, Pointe d'Esny and Mahebourg are at risk of drowning in a sea of pollution, with dire consequences for Mauritius' economy, food security and health.