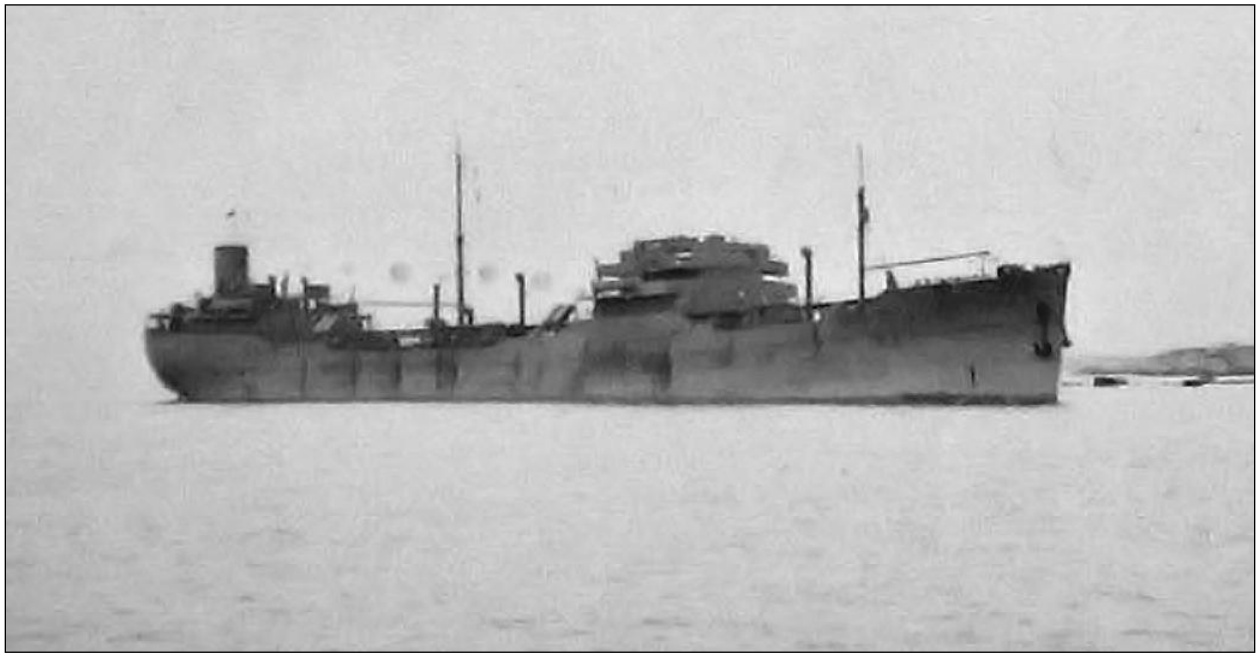
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Office of Response and Restoration

Screening Level Risk Assessment Package

Empire Gem



March 2013

National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

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Photo: U.S. Coast Guard Identification Photograph of *Empire Gem*
Courtesy of National Archives, Washington, DC

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Project Background

The past century of commerce and warfare has left a legacy of thousands of sunken vessels along the U.S. coast. Many of these wrecks pose environmental threats because of the hazardous nature of their cargoes, presence of munitions, or bunker fuel oils left onboard. As these wrecks corrode and decay, they may release oil or hazardous materials. Although a few vessels, such as USS *Arizona* in Hawaii, are well-publicized environmental threats, most wrecks, unless they pose an immediate pollution threat or impede navigation, are left alone and are largely forgotten until they begin to leak.

In order to narrow down the potential sites for inclusion into regional and area contingency plans, in 2010, Congress appropriated $1 million to identify the most ecologically and economically significant potentially polluting wrecks in U.S. waters. This project supports the U.S. Coast Guard and the Regional Response Teams as well as NOAA in prioritizing threats to coastal resources while at the same time assessing the historical and cultural significance of these nonrenewable cultural resources.

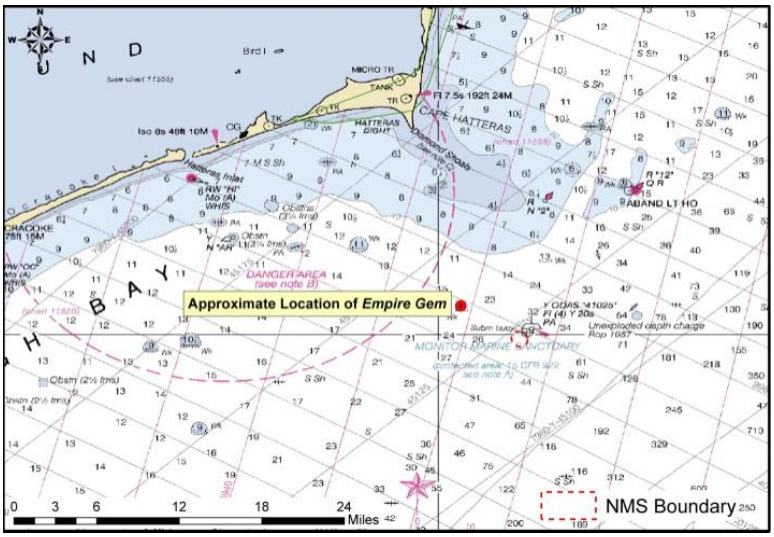
The potential polluting shipwrecks were identified through searching a broad variety of historical sources. NOAA then worked with Research Planning, Inc., RPS ASA, and Environmental Research Consulting to conduct the modeling forecasts, and the ecological and environmental resources at risk assessments.

Initial evaluations of shipwrecks located within American waters found that approximately 600-1,000 wrecks could pose a substantial pollution threat based on their age, type and size. This includes vessels sunk after 1891 (when vessels began being converted to use oil as fuel), vessels built of steel or other durable material (wooden vessels have likely deteriorated), cargo vessels over 1,000 gross tons (smaller vessels would have limited cargo or bunker capacity), and any tank vessel.

Additional ongoing research has revealed that 87 wrecks pose a potential pollution threat due to the violent nature in which some ships sank and the structural reduction and demolition of those that were navigational hazards. To further screen and prioritize these vessels, risk factors and scores have been applied to elements such as the amount of oil that could be on board and the potential ecological or environmental impact.

Executive Summary: *Empire Gem*

The tanker *Empire Gem*, torpedoed and sunk during World War II off the coast of North Carolina in 1942, was identified as a potential pollution threat, thus a screening-level risk assessment was conducted. The different sections of this document summarize what is known about the *Empire Gem*, the results of environmental impact modeling composed of different release scenarios, the ecological and socio-economic resources that would be at risk in the event of releases, the screening-level risk scoring results and overall risk assessment, and recommendations for assessment, monitoring, or remediation.



Based on this screening-level assessment, each vessel was assigned a summary score calculated using the seven risk criteria described in this report. For the Worst Case Discharge, *Empire Gem* scores Medium with 12 points; for the Most Probable Discharge (10% of the Worse Case volume), *Empire Gem* also scores Medium with 12 points. Given these scores and the high level of data certainty, NOAA recommends that the site be noted in the Area Contingency Plans so that if a mystery spill is reported in the general area, this vessel could be investigated as a source. NOAA has conducted a multibeam survey of the *Empire Gem* that shows the overall condition of the wreck. Because it is reported to be leaking, an active monitoring program is recommended. Outreach efforts with the technical and recreational dive community as well as commercial and recreational fishermen who frequent the area would be helpful to gain awareness of changes in oil release rates or amounts.

Vessel Risk Factors		Risk Score	
Pollution Potential Factors	A1: Oil Volume (total bbl)	Med	
	A2: Oil Type		
	B: Wreck Clearance		
	C1: Burning of the Ship		
	C2: Oil on Water		
	D1: Nature of Casualty		
	D2: Structural Breakup		
Archaeological Assessment	Archaeological Assessment	Not Scored	
Operational Factors	Wreck Orientation	Not Scored	
	Depth		
	Confirmation of Site Condition		
	Other Hazardous Materials		
	Munitions Onboard		
	Gravesite (Civilian/Military)		
	Historical Protection Eligibility		
		WCD	MP (10%)
Ecological Resources	3A: Water Column Resources	Low	Low
	3B: Water Surface Resources	Med	Med
	3C: Shore Resources	Low	Low
Socio-Economic Resources	4A: Water Column Resources	Low	Low
	4B: Water Surface Resources	High	High
	4C: Shore Resources	Med	Med
Summary Risk Scores		12	12

The determination of each risk factor is explained in the document. This summary table is found on page 39.

SECTION 1: VESSEL BACKGROUND INFORMATION: REMEDIATION OF UNDERWATER LEGACY ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS (RULET)

Vessel Particulars

Official Name: *Empire Gem*

Official Number: 168691

Vessel Type: Tanker

Vessel Class: N/A

Former Names: N/A

Year Built: 1941

Builder: Harland & Wolff, Ltd., Glasgow

Builder's Hull Number: 1045G

Flag: British

Owner at Loss: British Ministry of War Transport (British Tanker Co. Ld. Mgrs.)

Controlled by: Unknown

Chartered to: Unknown

Operated by: Unknown

Homeport: Glasgow

Length: 463 feet **Beam:** 61 feet **Depth:** 33 feet

Gross Tonnage: 8,139 **Net Tonnage:** 4,743

Hull Material: Steel **Hull Fastenings:** Riveted **Powered by:** Oil Engines

Bunker Type: Medium Fuel Oil **(**Marine Diesel) **Bunker Capacity (bbl):** Unknown

Average Bunker Consumption (bbl) per 24 hours: Unknown

Liquid Cargo Capacity (bbl): Unknown **Dry Cargo Capacity:** Unknown

Tank or Hold Description: Unknown

Casualty Information

Port Departed: Port Arthur, TX

Destination Port: Halifax then the UK

Date Departed: Unknown

Date Lost: January 24, 1942

Number of Days Sailing: Unknown

Cause of Sinking: Act of War (Torpedoes)

Latitude (DD): 35.03046

Longitude (DD): -75.47598

Nautical Miles to Shore: 12

Nautical Miles to NMS: 3.72

Nautical Miles to MPA: 0

Nautical Miles to Fisheries: Unknown

Approximate Water Depth (Ft): 145

Bottom Type: Sand

Is There a Wreck at This Location? Yes, wreck has been positively located and identified

Wreck Orientation: Broken in two with the bow inverted and the stern resting on an even keel

Vessel Armament: One 4-inch gun, one 12-pounder gun, multiple machine guns

Cargo Carried when Lost: 10,692 tons of motor spirit, 920 tons of machinery

Cargo Oil Carried (bbl): Approximately 76,982

Cargo Oil Type: Light Fuel Oil

Probable Fuel Oil Remaining (bbl): Unknown <10,000

Fuel Type: Medium Fuel Oil (Diesel)

Total Oil Carried (bbl): ≤ 87,000

Dangerous Cargo or Munitions: Yes

Munitions Carried: Munitions for onboard weapons

Demolished after Sinking: Unknown

Salvaged: No

Cargo Lost: Yes, partially

Reportedly Leaking: Yes (as recently as June 2011)

Historically Significant: Yes

Gravesite: Yes

Salvage Owner: Not known if any

Wreck Location

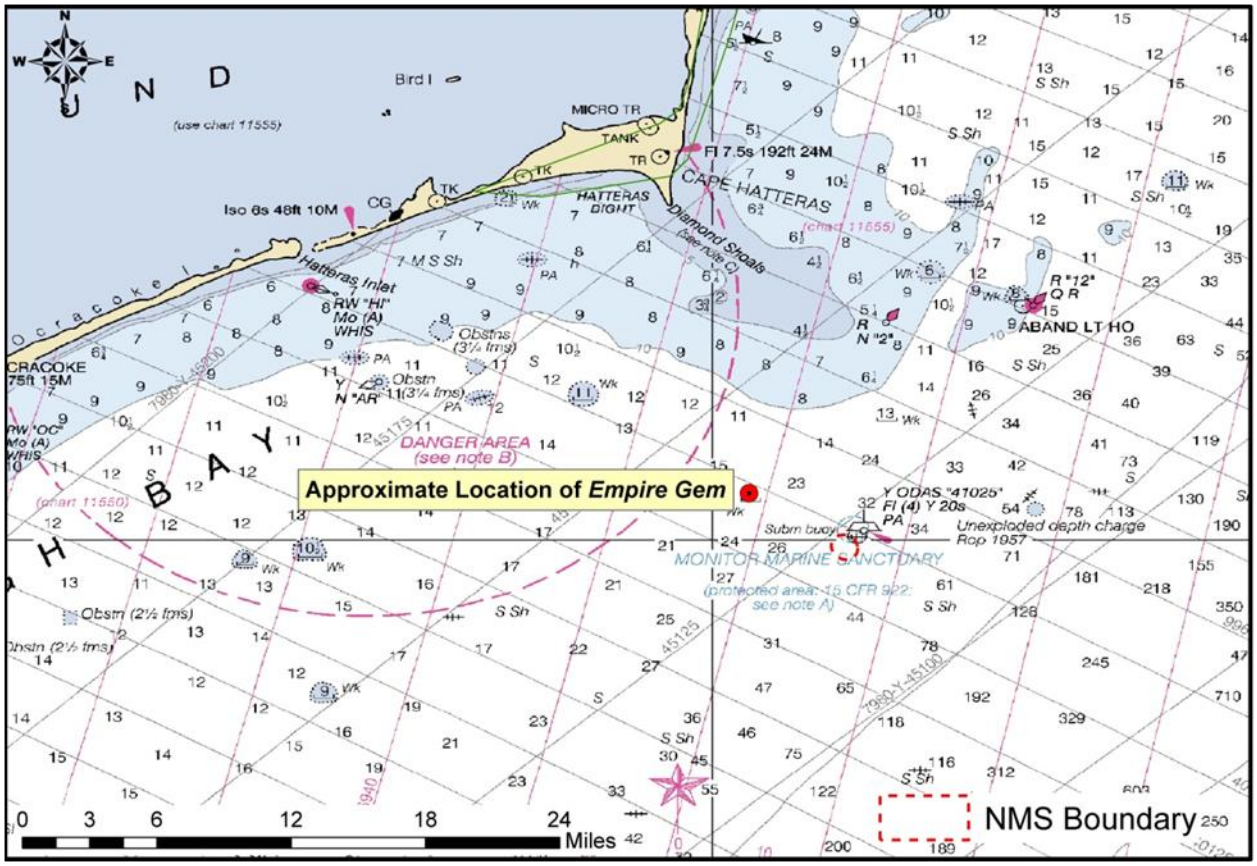


Chart Number: 12200

Casualty Narrative

"At 02.40 hours on 24 Jan, 1942, the unescorted *Empire Gem* (Master Francis Reginald Broad) was hit amidships and aft by two torpedoes from *U-66* 15 mile southeast of the Diamond Shoals buoy off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. The tanker immediately caught fire and later broke in two and sank in 35°02N/75°33W. 43 crew members and six gunners were lost. The master and the radio operator were picked up by a U.S. Coast Guard vessel and landed at Hatteras Inlet on 25 January."
-http://www.uboat.net:8080/allies/merchants/ships/1289.html

General Notes

-This wreck is known locally as the "stink wreck" because of the smell of oil that is encountered when travelling over the bow of the wreck. The wreck has been leaking since 1942 so the actual amount of oil still contained within the vessel is unknown. The smell of oil was present on the wreck as recently as June 2011 when NOAA's research vessel *SRVx* was over the site conducting multibeam surveys.

AWOIS Data:
HISTORY
NM DATED 8/22/55
NM21/42--BUOYED
DESCRIPTION-

NO.445; TANKER, 8139 GT, SUNK 1/24/42 BY SUBMARINE; POSITION ACCURACY WITHIN 1 MILE AT 35-01-49N, 75-28-35W, LOCATED 8/4/44(SOURCE UNK); WD CLEARED TO 101 FT. (SOURCE UNK).

NO. 335; TANKER, 10600 NT; SUNK 1/23/42; THE WRECK LIES IN TWO PARTS BEARING 40 DEG. AND 220 DEG FROM EACH OTHER IN 132 FT. OF WATER, AND LESS THAN 100 YDS. APART; HEAVY OIL SLICK, REPORTED THRU 5TH NAVAL DIST. HEADQUARTERS 8/4/44; POS.35-01-24N,75-29-45W WK IN TWO PARTS 40 DEG AND 220 DEG FROM EACH OTHER IN 132 FT OF WATER LESS THAN 100 YDS APART AT POS.35-01-48N, 75-29-45W, REPORTED THRU 5TH ND LORAN-C RATES: 9960 CHAIN; 26903.3-X AND 40172.7-Y; STEVEN PFAF(919-759-9525) PROVIDED THE VERIFIED LORAN NUMBERS.TKR;10600 GT, SUNK 1/23/42 IN LAT.35-01-24N, LONG.75-29-44W. BROKEN IN TWO, DEPTH 137FT.TKR; TORPEDOED 1/24/42; 101 FT OVER WK, 139 FT.

Wreck Condition/Salvage History

"I have dived this 4-5 times and except for one exceptional dive, the viz has been 25 feet or much less. There are reported to be 2 separate pieces: the stern end and the rest of the ship. The stern section is the better dive, as the bow is intact but upside down; I have been on the bow, but viz was so low, I couldn't confirm the orientation or make the jump to the stern, but did discover the :"turtle shell" surface typical of an upside down hull. I am told the stern points towards the two forward sections — prop/fantail points toward the other two sections — 180 degrees from what you would expect; the stern is upright on its keel, laying on its starboard side; the 4 bladed prop and rudder sections are intact and can be seen on the port side; You can still see the curve of the fantail around the stern; the engine, port boilers and fantail appear to provide the highest relief on the stern; this wreck is known as the smell or stink wreck because of the smell of oil that still escapes from the bow section; You can sometimes see the oil slick on the water" -- http://www.nc-wreckdiving.com/WRECKS/EMPIREGEM/EMPIREGEM.HTML.

Archaeological Assessment

The archaeological assessment provides additional primary source based documentation about the sinking of vessels. It also provides condition-based archaeological assessment of the wrecks when possible. It does not provide a risk-based score or definitively assess the pollution risk or lack thereof from these vessels, but includes additional information that could not be condensed into database form.

Where the current condition of a shipwreck is not known, data from other archaeological studies of similar types of shipwrecks provide the means for brief explanations of what the shipwreck might look like and specifically whether it is thought there is sufficient structural integrity to retain oil. This is more subjective than the Pollution Potential Tree and computer-generated resource at risk models, and as such provides an additional viewpoint to examine risk assessments and assess the threat posed by these shipwrecks. It also addresses questions of historical significance and the relevant historic preservation laws and regulations that will govern on-site assessments.

In some cases where little additional historic information has been uncovered about the loss of a vessel, archaeological assessments cannot be made with any degree of certainty and were not prepared. For vessels with full archaeological assessments, NOAA archaeologists and contracted archivists have taken

photographs of primary source documents from the National Archives that can be made available for future research or on-site activities.

Assessment

Based on initial screening criteria, the tanker *Empire Gem* was listed as a higher priority shipwreck because it is one of the few shipwrecks within U.S. Coast Guard District 5 that NOAA has verified still contains oil. The wreck is also known locally as the "stink wreck" or as the "smell wreck" because there is often the odor of heavy oil on the surface over the bow section of the shipwreck. Although this information suggests that some oil remains inside the wreck, the violent nature in which the ship sank and the type of cargo the ship carried reveals that the shipwreck is likely a very low priority for proactive oil removal.

At the time of its loss, *Empire Gem* was carrying a cargo of 76,982 bbl of gasoline and probably had a bunker capacity of less than 10,000 bbl of marine diesel. When the tanker was torpedoed on January 24, 1942, the cargo of gasoline quickly ignited and flames spread across the entire length of the vessel as it continued to run at full speed until the engines died three hours later. The vessel then broke in half, causing the stern to sink and the bow to remain afloat and on fire for over twelve hours, at which time the only two survivors were rescued. It is not known when the fire finally died out, but the tanker was still afloat in an upright orientation on January 28, which would have permitted gasoline to continue to escape out of the vents, pipes, and damaged tanks on the ship. It is also not known when the tanker finally sank (some reports state it was still afloat on April 7, 1942), but eventually the bow section rolled over and sank in an inverted position, effectively trapping any oil that remained onboard.

On August 4, 1944, the Fifth Naval District conducted a survey of the wreck and reported a heavy oil slick on the surface above the wreck, and the wreckage was resting in two separate pieces less than 100 yards apart. It is possible that the oil reported at this time was escaping from the stern section of the wreck because no oil is believed to still exist in this section. It is also possible that oil continued to escape from the inverted bow section through breeches in the hull or popped rivets. Apparently, not all of the oil inside the tanker burned or was released in the slick that was spotted in 1944, however, because the shipwreck is still known as the "stink wreck" and because NOAA researchers could smell oil above the wreck while conducting a multibeam survey of the site in June of 2011 (Fig. 1-1). What NOAA researchers found interesting, however, was that the odor seemed to be one that would emanate from heavy bunker oils.

Given that *Empire Gem* was carrying a cargo of gasoline at the time it was lost and powered by diesel engines, something did not seem to add up between the historic record and the odor of oil present at the site. Because of this discrepancy, NOAA archaeologists began looking for any information that could explain the presence of heavy oil on the site. After examining a Lloyd's Survey Report for *Empire Gem* more closely, a small notation was discovered that revealed that *Empire Gem* carried oil fuel with a flash point above 150^{o} F in some of the oil bunkers aft, the deep tank forward, and the double bottom in the machinery space. This oil was probably used to generate steam in the Donkey Boilers that powered the tanker's deck machinery. Because the stern is upright and open to the sea, it is not believed that any oil remains in the bunker tanks or machinery space, but it is likely that the tanker was carrying heavy fuel oil in the forward deep tank and that this oil is what is commonly smelled escaping from the wreck.

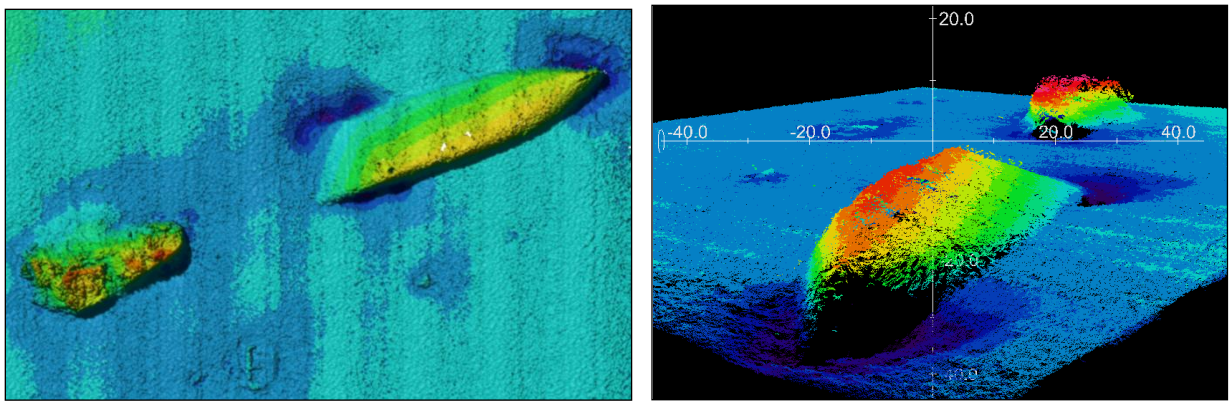


Figure 1-1: Multibeam sonar images of *Empire Gem* collected during *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary's Battle of the Atlantic Expedition (NOAA 2011).

If this is indeed the case, then the amount of oil remaining on the wreck is likely very low. The forward deep tank only had a cargo capacity of 261 tons or approximately 1,905 bbl. Given that the wreck has been leaking for many years, it is likely that the actual remaining volume of oil is much less than the original capacity of the forward deep tank. Although NOAA archaeologists cannot determine exactly how much oil remains on the site, the best information currently available suggests the volume is quite low. Regardless of the amount of oil remaining in the tanker, it is one of the vessels within U.S. Coast Guard District 5 that NOAA has confirmed still contains oil and may be worthy of additional assessment.

It should be noted that this vessel is of historic significance and will require appropriate actions be taken under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and possibly the Sunken Military Craft Act (SMCA) prior to any actions that could impact the integrity of the vessel. This vessel may be eligible for listing on the National Historic Register. The site is also considered a war grave and appropriate actions should be undertaken to minimize disturbance to the site.

Background Information References

Vessel Image Sources: National Archives, College Park, MD

Construction Diagrams or Plans in RULET Database? No

Text References:
AWOIS database
NIMA database
Global Wrecks
http://www.uboat.net/allies/merchants/ships/1289.html
http://www.nc-wreckdiving.com/WRECKS/EMPIREGEM/EMPIREGEM.HTML

Vessel Risk Factors

In this section, the risk factors that are associated with the vessel are defined and then applied to the *Empire Gem* based on the information available. These factors are reflected in the pollution potential risk assessment development by the U.S. Coast Guard Salvage Engineering Response Team (SERT) as a means to apply a salvage engineer's perspective to the historical information gathered by NOAA. This

analysis reflected in Figure 1-2 is simple and straightforward and, in combination with the accompanying archaeological assessment, provides a picture of the wreck that is as complete as possible based on current knowledge and best professional judgment. This assessment *does not* take into consideration operational constraints such as depth or unknown location, but rather attempts to provide a replicable and objective screening of the historical date for each vessel. SERT reviewed the general historical information available for the database as a whole and provided a stepwise analysis for an initial indication of Low/Medium/High values for each vessel.

In some instances, nuances from the archaeological assessment may provide additional input that will amend the score for Section 1. Where available, additional information that may have bearing on operational considerations for any assessment or remediation activities is provided.

Each risk factor is characterized as High, Medium, or Low Risk or a category-appropriate equivalent such as No, Unknown, Yes, or Yes Partially. The risk categories correlate to the decision points reflected in Figure 1-2.

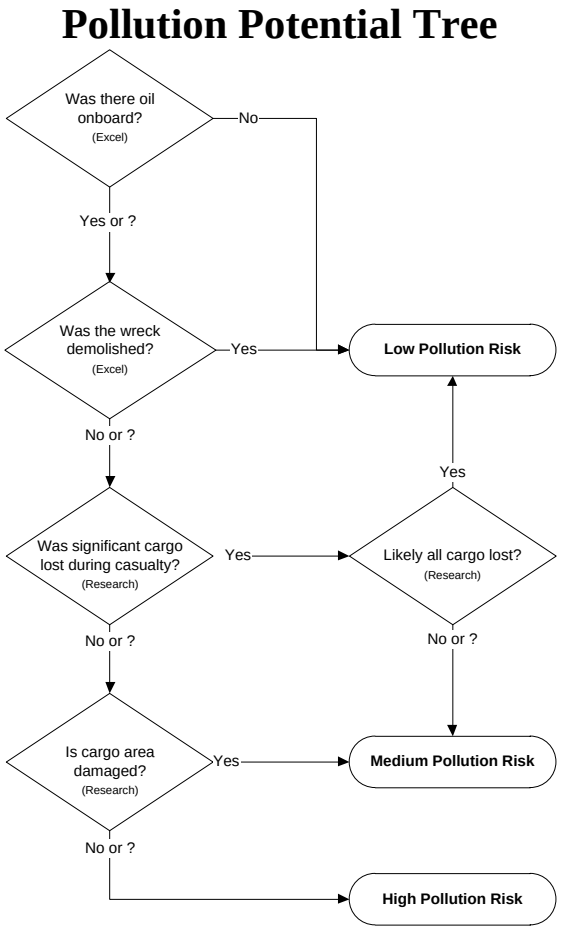


Figure 1-2: U.S. Coast Guard Salvage Engineering Response Team (SERT) developed the above Pollution Potential Decision Tree.

Each of the risk factors also has a "data quality modifier" that reflects the completeness and reliability of the information on which the risk ranks were assigned. The quality of the information is evaluated with respect to the factors required for a reasonable preliminary risk assessment. The data quality modifier scale is:

- **High Data Quality:** All or most pertinent information on wreck available to allow for thorough risk assessment and evaluation. The data quality is high and confirmed.
- **Medium Data Quality:** Much information on wreck available, but some key factor data are missing or the data quality is questionable or not verified. Some additional research needed.
- **Low Data Quality:** Significant issues exist with missing data on wreck that precludes making preliminary risk assessment, and/or the data quality is suspect. Significant additional research needed.

In the following sections, the definition of low, medium, and high for each risk factor is provided. Also, the classification for the *Empire Gem* is provided, both as text and as shading of the applicable degree of risk bullet.

Pollution Potential Factors

Risk Factor A1: Total Oil Volume

The oil volume classifications correspond to the U.S. Coast Guard spill classifications:

- **Low Volume: Minor Spill** <240 bbl (10,000 gallons)
- **Medium Volume: Medium Spill** ≥240 – 2,400 bbl (100,000 gallons)
- **High Volume: Major Spill** ≥2,400 bbl (≥100,000 gallons)

The oil volume risk classifications refer to the volume of the most-likely Worst Case Discharge from the vessel and are based on the amount of oil believed or confirmed to be on the vessel.

The *Empire Gem i*s ranked as Medium Volume because it is thought to have a potential for up to 1,905 bbl although some of that was lost at the time of the casualty due to the explosion, breakup of the vessel, and leaks over time. Data quality is medium.

The risk factor for volume also incorporates any reports or anecdotal evidence of actual leakage from the vessel or reports from divers of oil in the overheads, as opposed to potential leakage. This reflects the history of the vessel's leakage. There are many reports of leakage from the *Empire Gem*, the wreck is known locally as the "stink wreck" or the "smell wreck" because of the odor of oil commonly associated with the site.

Risk Factor A2: Oil Type

The oil type(s) on board the wreck are classified only with regard to persistence, using the U.S. Coast Guard oil grouping[1]. (Toxicity is dealt with in the impact risk for the Resources at Risk classifications.) The three oil classifications are:

[1] Group I Oil or Nonpersistent oil is defined as "a petroleum-based oil that, at the time of shipment, consists of hydrocarbon fractions: At least 50% of which, by volume, distill at a temperature of 340°C (645°F); and at least 95% of which, by volume, distill at a temperature of 370°C (700°F)."

- **Low Risk: Group I Oils** – non-persistent oil (e.g., gasoline)
- **Medium Risk: Group II – III Oils** – medium persistent oil (e.g., diesel, No. 2 fuel, light crude, medium crude)
- **High Risk: Group IV** – high persistent oil (e.g., heavy crude oil, No. 6 fuel oil, Bunker C)

The *Empire Gem* is classified as High Risk because the oil believed to remain on the site is heavy fuel oil, a Group IV oil type. Data quality is high.

Was the wreck demolished?

Risk Factor B: Wreck Clearance

This risk factor addresses whether or not the vessel was historically reported to have been demolished as a hazard to navigation or by other means such as depth charges or aerial bombs. This risk factor is based on historic records and does not take into account what a wreck site currently looks like. The risk categories are defined as:

- **Low Risk:** The wreck was reported to have been entirely destroyed after the casualty
- **Medium Risk:** The wreck was reported to have been partially cleared or demolished after the casualty
- **High Risk:** The wreck was not reported to have been cleared or demolished after the casualty
- **Unknown:** It is not known whether or not the wreck was cleared or demolished at the time of or after the casualty

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk because the stern of the ship was reportedly demolished, but the bow was inverted and was not demolished as a navigational hazard. Data quality is high.

Was significant cargo or bunker lost during casualty?

Risk Factor C1: Burning of the Ship

This risk factor addresses any burning that is known to have occurred at the time of the vessel casualty and may have resulted in oil products being consumed or breaks in the hull or tanks that would have increased the potential for oil to escape from the shipwreck. The risk categories are:

- **Low Risk:** Burned for multiple days
- **Medium Risk:** Burned for several hours
- **High Risk:** No burning reported at the time of the vessel casualty
- **Unknown:** It is not known whether or not the vessel burned at the time of the casualty

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk because there was a report of fire at the time of casualty that continued to burn for at least 12 hours after the ship was torpedoed. Data quality is high.

Group II - Specific gravity less than 0.85 crude [API° >35.0]
Group III - Specific gravity between 0.85 and less than .95 [API° ≤35.0 and >17.5]
Group IV - Specific gravity between 0.95 to and including 1.0 [API° ≤17.5 and >10.0]

Risk Factor C2: Reported Oil on the Water

This risk factor addresses reports of oil on the water at the time of the vessel casualty. The amount is relative and based on the number of available reports of the casualty. Seldom are the reports from trained observers so this is very subjective information. The risk categories are defined as:

- **Low Risk:** Large amounts of oil reported on the water by multiple sources
- **Medium Risk:** Moderate to little oil reported on the water during or after the sinking event
- **High Risk:** No oil reported on the water
- **Unknown:** It is not known whether or not there was oil on the water at the time of the casualty

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk because the oil was reported to have spread across the water as the vessel went down. Data quality is high.

Is the cargo area damaged?

Risk Factor D1: Nature of the Casualty

This risk factor addresses the means by which the vessel sank. The risk associated with each type of casualty is determined by the how violent the sinking event was and the factors that would contribute to increased initial damage or destruction of the vessel (which would lower the risk of oil, other cargo, or munitions remaining on board). The risk categories are:

- **Low Risk:** Multiple torpedo detonations, multiple mines, severe explosion
- **Medium Risk:** Single torpedo, shellfire, single mine, rupture of hull, breaking in half, grounding on rocky shoreline
- **High Risk:** Foul weather, grounding on soft bottom, collision
- **Unknown:** The cause of the loss of the vessel is not known

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Low Risk because there were two torpedo detonations, and the vessel is broken into two sections. Data quality is high.

Risk Factor D2: Structural Breakup

This risk factor takes into account how many pieces the vessel broke into during the sinking event or since sinking. This factor addresses how likely it is that multiple components of a ship were broken apart including tanks, valves, and pipes. Experience has shown that even vessels broken in three large sections can still have significant pollutants on board if the sections still have some structural integrity. The risk categories are:

- **Low Risk:** The vessel is broken into more than three pieces
- **Medium Risk:** The vessel is broken into two-three pieces
- **High Risk:** The vessel is not broken and remains as one contiguous piece
- **Unknown:** It is currently not known whether or not the vessel broke apart at the time of loss or after sinking

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk because it is broken into at least two pieces at the time of casualty; whether additional structural breakup occurred is unknown as location is unknown. Data quality is high.

Factors That May Impact Potential Operations

Orientation (degrees)

This factor addresses what may be known about the current orientation of the intact pieces of the wreck (with emphasis on those pieces where tanks are located) on the seafloor. For example, if the vessel turtled, not only may it have avoided demolition as a hazard to navigation, but it has a higher likelihood of retaining an oil cargo in the non-vented and more structurally robust bottom of the hull.

The bow of the *Empire Gem* is inverted and the stern is upright on an even keel. Data quality is high.

Depth

Depth information is provided where known. In many instances, depth will be an approximation based on charted depths at the last known locations.

The *Empire Gem* is 145 feet deep. Data quality is high.

Visual or Remote Sensing Confirmation of Site Condition

This factor takes into account what the physical status of wreck site as confirmed by remote sensing or other means such as ROV or diver observations and assesses its capability to retain a liquid cargo. This assesses whether or not the vessel was confirmed as entirely demolished as a hazard to navigation, or severely compromised by other means such as depth charges, aerial bombs, or structural collapse.

The location of the *Empire Gem* is a well known diving and fishing site. Data quality is high.

Other Hazardous (Non-Oil) Cargo on Board

This factor addresses hazardous cargo other than oil that may be on board the vessel and could potentially be released, causing impacts to ecological and socio-economic resources at risk.

There are no reports of hazardous materials onboard. Data quality is high.

Munitions on Board

This factor addresses hazardous cargo other than oil that may be on board the vessel and could potentially be released or detonated causing impacts to ecological and socio-economic resources at risk.

The *Empire Gem* had munitions for onboard weapons, one 4-inch gun, one 12-pounder gun, and multiple machine guns. Data quality is high.

Vessel Pollution Potential Summary

Table 1-1 summarizes the risk factor scores for the pollution potential and mitigating factors that would reduce the pollution potential for the *Empire Gem*. Operational factors are listed but do not have a risk score.

Table 1-1: Summary matrix for the vessel risk factors for the *Empire Gem* color-coded as red (high risk), yellow (medium risk), and green (low risk).

Vessel Risk Factors		Data Quality Score	Comments	Risk Score
Pollution Potential Factors	A1: Oil Volume (total bbl)	Medium	Maximum of 1,905 bbl, vessel is reported to be leaking	**Med**
	A2: Oil Type	High	Cargo is heavy fuel oil, a Group IV oil type	
	B: Wreck Clearance	High	Vessel reported as partially cleared	
	C1: Burning of the Ship	High	Fire and explosion was reported	
	C2: Oil on Water	High	Oil was reported on the water, amount is not known	
	D1: Nature of Casualty	High	Multiple torpedoes, severe explosion	
	D2: Structural Breakup	High	The vessel broke in two at the time of sinking	
Archaeological Assessment	Archaeological Assessment	High	Detailed sinking records and site assessments of this ship exist, assessment is believed to be very accurate	**Not Scored**
Operational Factors	Wreck Orientation	Low	The bow is inverted and the stern is upright	**Not Scored**
	Depth	Low	The wreck is 145 feet deep	
	Visual or Remote Sensing Confirmation of Site Condition	Low	The wreck is a technical diving and popular fishing site	
	Other Hazardous Materials Onboard	Medium	No	
	Munitions Onboard	High	Yes, for onboard weapons	
	Gravesite (Civilian/Military)	High	Yes	
	Historical Protection Eligibility (NHPA/SMCA)	High	NHPA and possibly SMCA	

SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT MODELING

To help evaluate the potential transport and fates of releases from sunken wrecks, NOAA worked with RPS ASA to run a series of generalized computer model simulations of potential oil releases. The results are used to assess potential impacts to ecological and socio-economic resources, as described in Sections 3 and 4. The modeling results are useful for this screening-level risk assessment; however, it should be noted that detailed site/vessel/and seasonally specific modeling would need to be conducted prior to any intervention on a specific wreck.

Release Scenarios Used in the Modeling

The potential volume of leakage at any point in time will tend to follow a probability distribution. Most discharges are likely to be relatively small, though there could be multiple such discharges. There is a lower probability of larger discharges, though these scenarios would cause the greatest damage. A **Worst Case Discharge** (WCD) would involve the release of all of the cargo oil and bunkers present on the vessel. In the case of the *Empire Gem* this would be about 2,000 bbl based on current estimates of the maximum amount of oil remaining onboard the wreck being the heavy fuel oil for the Donkey Boilers.

The likeliest scenario of oil release from most sunken wrecks, including the *Empire Gem*, is a small, episodic release that may be precipitated by disturbance of the vessel in storms. Each of these episodic releases may cause impacts and require a response. **Episodic** releases are modeled using 1% of the WCD. Another scenario is a very low chronic release, i.e., a relatively regular release of small amounts of oil that causes continuous oiling and impacts over the course of a long period of time. This type of release would likely be precipitated by corrosion of piping that allows oil to flow or bubble out at a slow, steady rate. **Chronic** releases are modeled using 0.1% of the WCD.

The **Most Probable** scenario is premised on the release of all the oil from one tank. In the absence of information on the number and condition of the cargo or fuel tanks for all the wrecks being assessed, this scenario is modeled using 10% of the WCD. The **Large** scenario is loss of 50% of the WCD. The five major types of releases are summarized in Table 2-1. The actual type of release that occurs will depend on the condition of the vessel, time factors, and disturbances to the wreck. Note that episodic and chronic release scenarios represent a small release that is repeated many times, potentially repeating the same magnitude and type of impact(s) with each release. The actual impacts would depend on the environmental factors such as real-time and forecast winds and currents during each release and the types/quantities of ecological and socio-economic resources present.

The model results here are based on running the RPS ASA Spill Impact Model Application Package (SIMAP) two hundred times for each of the five spill volumes shown in Table 2-1. The model randomly selects the date of the release, and corresponding environmental, wind, and ocean current information from a long-term wind and current database.

When a spill occurs, the trajectory, fate, and effects of the oil will depend on environmental variables, such as the wind and current directions over the course of the oil release, as well as seasonal effects. The

magnitude and nature of potential impacts to resources will also generally have a strong seasonal component (e.g., timing of bird migrations, turtle nesting periods, fishing seasons, and tourism seasons).

Table 2-1: Potential oil release scenario types for the *Empire Gem*.

Scenario Type	Release per Episode	Time Period	Release Rate	Relative Likelihood	Response Tier
Chronic (0.1% of WCD)	2 bbl	Fairly regular intervals or constant	100 bbl over several days	More likely	Tier 1
Episodic (1% of WCD)	20 bbl	Irregular intervals	Over several hours or days	Most Probable	Tier 1-2
Most Probable (10% of WCD)	200 bbl	One-time release	Over several hours or days	Most Probable	Tier 2
Large (50% of WCD)	1,000 bbl	One-time release	Over several hours or days	Less likely	Tier 2-3
Worst Case	2,000 bbl	One-time release	Over several hours or days	Least likely	Tier 3

The modeling results represent 200 simulations for each spill volume with variations in spill trajectory based on winds and currents. The spectrum of the simulations gives a perspective on the variations in likely impact scenarios. Some resources will be impacted in nearly all cases; some resources may not be impacted unless the spill trajectory happens to go in that direction based on winds and currents at the time of the release and in its aftermath.

For the large and WCD scenarios, the duration of the release was assumed to be 12 hours, envisioning a storm scenario where the wreck is damaged or broken up, and the model simulations were run for a period of 30 days. The releases were assumed to be from a depth between 2-3 meters above the sea floor, using the information known about the wreck location and depth.

As discussed in the NOAA 2013 Risk Assessment for Potentially Polluting Wrecks in U.S. Waters, NOAA identified 87 high and medium priority wrecks for screening-level risk assessment. Within the available funds, it was not feasible to conduct computer model simulations of all 87 high and medium priority wrecks. Therefore, efforts were made to create "clusters" of vessels in reasonable proximity and with similar oil types. In general, the wreck with the largest potential amount of oil onboard was selected for modeling of oil release volumes, and the results were used as surrogates for the other vessels in the cluster. In particular, the regression curves created for the modeled wreck were used to determine the impacts to water column, water surface, and shoreline resources. The *Empire Gem*, with up to 2,000 bbl onboard, was clustered with the *William Rockefeller*, which was modeled at 115,000 bbl of heavy fuel oil. Figure 2-1 shows the location of both vessels.

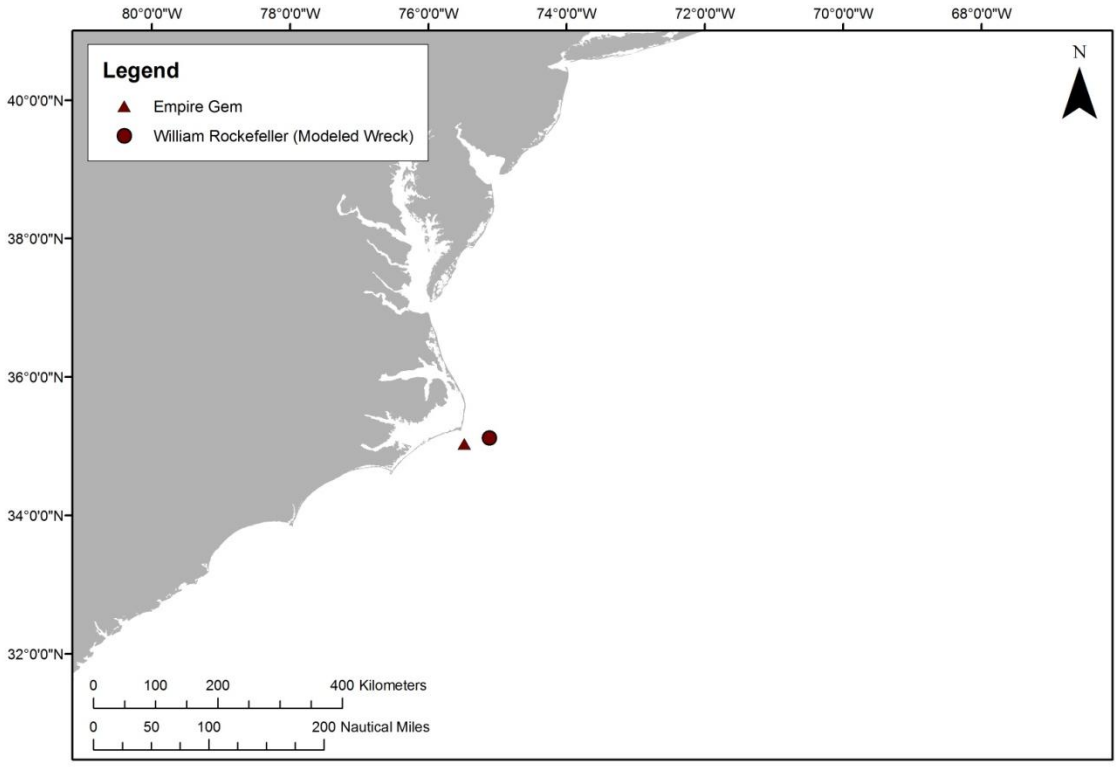


Figure 2-1: Location of the *Empire Gem* (red triangle), the wreck discussed in this package, and the *William Rockefeller* (red circle) which was the wreck that was actually modeled in the computer modeling simulations. The results for the *William Rockefeller* are used to estimate the impacts of releases from the *Empire Gem*, as discussed in the text.

It is important to acknowledge that these scenarios are only for this screening-level assessment. Detailed site/vessel/and seasonally specific modeling would need to be conducted prior to any intervention on a specific wreck.

Oil Type for Release

The *Empire Gem* contained a maximum of 1,905 bbl of heavy fuel oil (a Group IV oil). Thus, the spill model run for the *William Rockefeller* using heavy fuel oil was used for this assessment of the *Empire Gem*.

Oil Thickness Thresholds

The model results are reported for different oil thickness thresholds, based on the amount of oil on the water surface or shoreline and the resources potentially at risk. Table 2-2 shows the terminology and thicknesses used in this report, for both oil thickness on water and the shoreline. For oil on the water surface, a thickness of 0.01 g/m^2, which would appear as a barely visible sheen, was used as the threshold for socio-economic impacts because often fishing is prohibited in areas with any visible oil, to prevent contamination of fishing gear and catch. A thickness of 10 g/m^2 was used as the threshold for ecological impacts, primarily due to impacts to birds, because that amount of oil has been observed to be enough to mortally impact birds and other wildlife. In reality, it is very unlikely that oil would be evenly distributed on the water surface. Spilled oil is always distributed patchily on the water surface in bands or tarballs

with clean water in between. So, Table 2-2a shows the number of tarballs per acre on the water surface for these oil thickness thresholds, assuming that each tarball was a sphere that was 1 inch in diameter. For oil stranded onshore, a thickness of 1 g/m^2 was used as the threshold for socio-economic impacts because that amount of oil would conservatively trigger the need for shoreline cleanup on amenity beaches. A thickness of 100 g/m^2 was used as the threshold for ecological impacts based on a synthesis of the literature showing that shoreline life has been affected by this degree of oiling.[2] Because oil often strands onshore as tarballs, Table 2-2a shows the number of tarballs per m^2 on the shoreline for these oil thickness thresholds, assuming that each tarball was a sphere that was 1 inch in diameter.

Table 2-2a: Oil thickness thresholds used in calculating area of water impacted. Refer to Sections 3 and 4 for explanations of the thresholds for ecological and socio-economic resource impacts.

Oil Description	Sheen Appearance	Approximate Sheen Thickness		No. of 1 inch Tarballs	Threshold/Risk Factor
Oil Sheen	Barely Visible	0.00001 mm	0.01 g/m^2	~5-6 tarballs per acre	Socio-economic Impacts to Water Surface/Risk Factor 4B-1 and 2
Heavy Oil Sheen	Dark Colors	0.01 mm	10 g/m^2	~5,000-6,000 tarballs per acre	Ecological Impacts to Water Surface/ Risk Factor 3B-1 and 2

Table 2-2b: Oil thickness thresholds used in calculating miles of shoreline impacted. Refer to Sections 3 and 4 for explanations of the thresholds for ecological and socio-economic resource impacts.

Oil Description	Oil Appearance	Approximate Sheen Thickness		No. of 1 inch Tarballs	Threshold/Risk Factor
Oil Sheen/Tarballs	Dull Colors	0.001 mm	1 g/m^2	~0.12-0.14 tarballs/m^2	Socio-economic Impacts to Shoreline Users/Risk Factor 4C-1 and 2
Oil Slick/Tarballs	Brown to Black	0.1 mm	100 g/m^2	~12-14 tarballs/m^2	Ecological Impacts to Shoreline Habitats/Risk Factor 3C-1 and 2

Potential Impacts to the Water Column

Impacts to the water column from an oil release from the *Empire Gem* will be determined by the volume of leakage. Because oil from sunken vessels will be released at low pressures, the droplet sizes will be large enough for the oil to float to the surface. Therefore, impacts to water column resources will result from the natural dispersion of the floating oil slicks on the surface, which is limited to about the top 33 feet. The metric used for ranking impacts to the water column is the area of water surface in mi^2 that has been contaminated by 1 part per billion (ppb) oil to a depth of 33 feet. At 1 ppb, there are likely to be impacts to sensitive organisms in the water column and potential tainting of seafood, so this concentration is used as a screening threshold for both the ecological and socio-economic risk factors for water column resource impacts. To assist planners in understanding the scale of potential impacts for different leakage volumes, a regression curve was generated for the water column volume oiled using the five volume scenarios, which is shown in Figure 2-2, which is the regression curve for the *William Rockefeller*. Using this figure, the water column impacts can be estimated for any spill volume. On Figure 2-2, arrows are

[2] French, D., M. Reed, K. Jayko, S. Feng, H. Rines, S. Pavignano, T. Isaji, S. Puckett, A. Keller, F. W. French III, D. Gifford, J. McCue, G. Brown, E. MacDonald, J. Quirk, S. Natzke, R. Bishop, M. Welsh, M. Phillips and B.S. Ingram, 1996. The CERCLA type A natural resource damage assessment model for coastal and marine environments (NRDAM/CME), Technical Documentation, Vol. I - V. Final Report, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, U.S. Dept. Interior, Washington, DC.

used to indicate the where the WCD for the *Empire Gem* plots on the curve and how the area of the water column impact is determined.

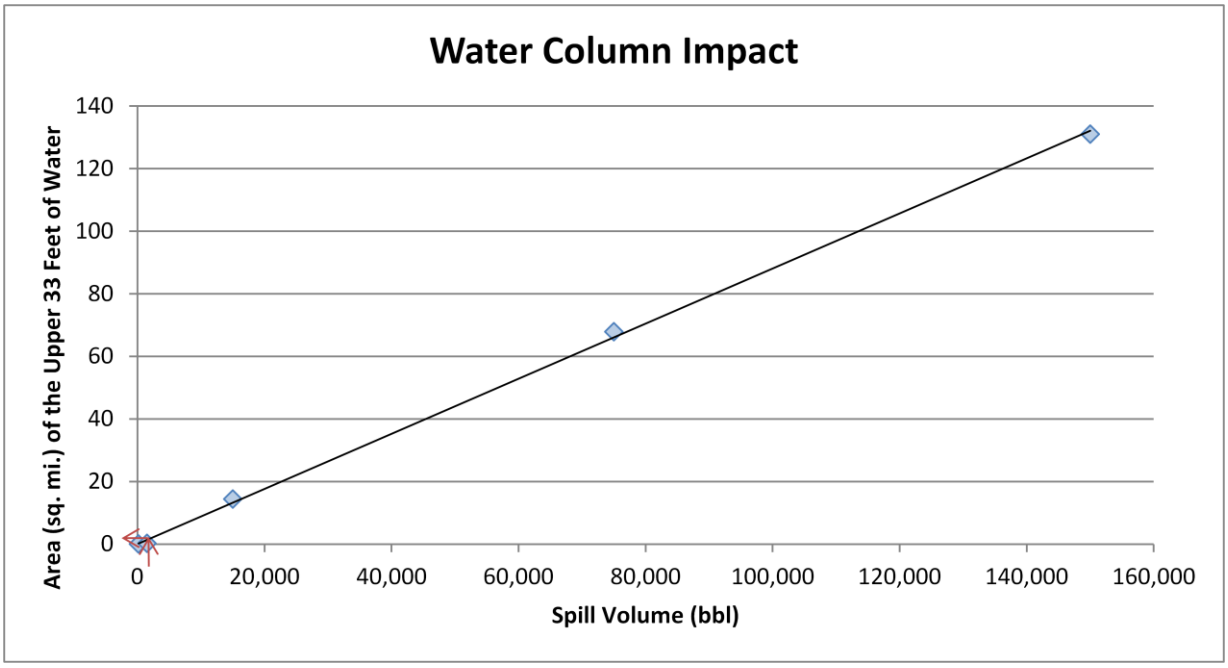


Figure 2-2a: Regression curve for estimating the area of water column at or above 1 ppb aromatics impacted as a function of spill volume for the *Empire Gem*. This regression curve was generated for the *William Rockefeller*, which has the same oil type and similar volume of potential releases as the *Empire Gem*. The arrows indicate where the WCD for the *Empire Gem* falls on the curve and how the area of water column impact was determined for any spill volume. Note arrows are in the very lower left corner. Figure 2-2b is an enlargement of this area.

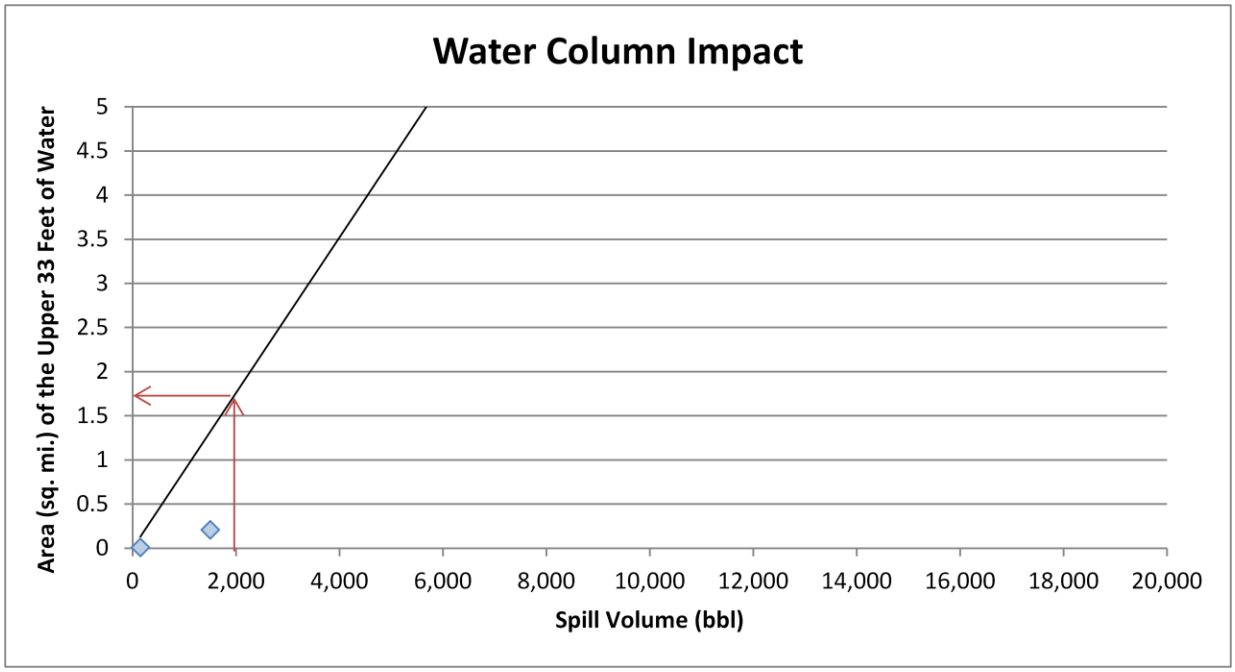


Figure 2-2b: The same regression curve as in Figure 2-2a, but zoomed in to show the WCD for the *Empire Gem*.

Potential Water Surface Slick

The slick size from an oil release is a function of the quantity released. The estimated water surface coverage by a fresh slick (the total water surface area "swept" by oil over time) for the various scenarios is shown in Table 2-3, as the mean result of the 200 model runs for the *William Rockefeller* then using the regression curve shown in Figure 2.3 to calculate the values for the different release scenarios for the *Empire Gem*. Note that this is an estimate of total water surface affected over a 30-day period. In the model, the representative heavy fuel oil used for this analysis spreads to a minimum thickness of approximately 975 g/m^2, and the oil is not able to spread any thinner, owing to its high viscosity. Thus, the results for the slick area swept are identical for the 0.01 and 10 g/m^2 thresholds. The slick will not be continuous but rather be broken and patchy due to the subsurface release of the oil. Surface expression is likely to be in the form of sheens, tarballs, and streamers. The location, size, shape, and spread of the oil slick(s) from an oil release from the *Empire Gem* will depend on environmental conditions, including winds and currents, at the time of release and in its aftermath. Refer to the risk assessment package for the *William Rockefeller* for maps (Figs. 2-2 and 2-3) showing the areas potentially affected by slicks using the Most Probable volume and the socio-economic and ecological thresholds.

Table 2-3: Estimated slick area swept on water for oil release scenarios from the *Empire Gem*, based on the model results for the *William Rockefeller*.

Scenario Type	Oil Volume (bbl)	Estimated Slick Area Swept Mean of All Models	
		0.01 g/m^2	10 g/m^2
Chronic	2	190 mi^2	190 mi^2
Episodic	20	640 mi^2	640 mi^2
Most Probable	200	2,100 mi^2	2,100 mi^2
Large	1,000	4,800 mi^2	4,800 mi^2
Worst Case Discharge	2,000	6,800 mi^2	6,800 mi^2

The actual area affected by a release will be determined by the volume of leakage, whether it is from one or more tanks at a time. To assist planners in understanding the scale of potential impacts for different leakage volumes, a regression curve was generated for the water surface area oiled using the five volume scenarios for the *William Rockefeller*, which is shown in Figure 2-3 and referenced in Table 2-3. Using this figure, the area of water surface with a barely visible sheen can be estimated for any spill volume from the *Empire Gem*.

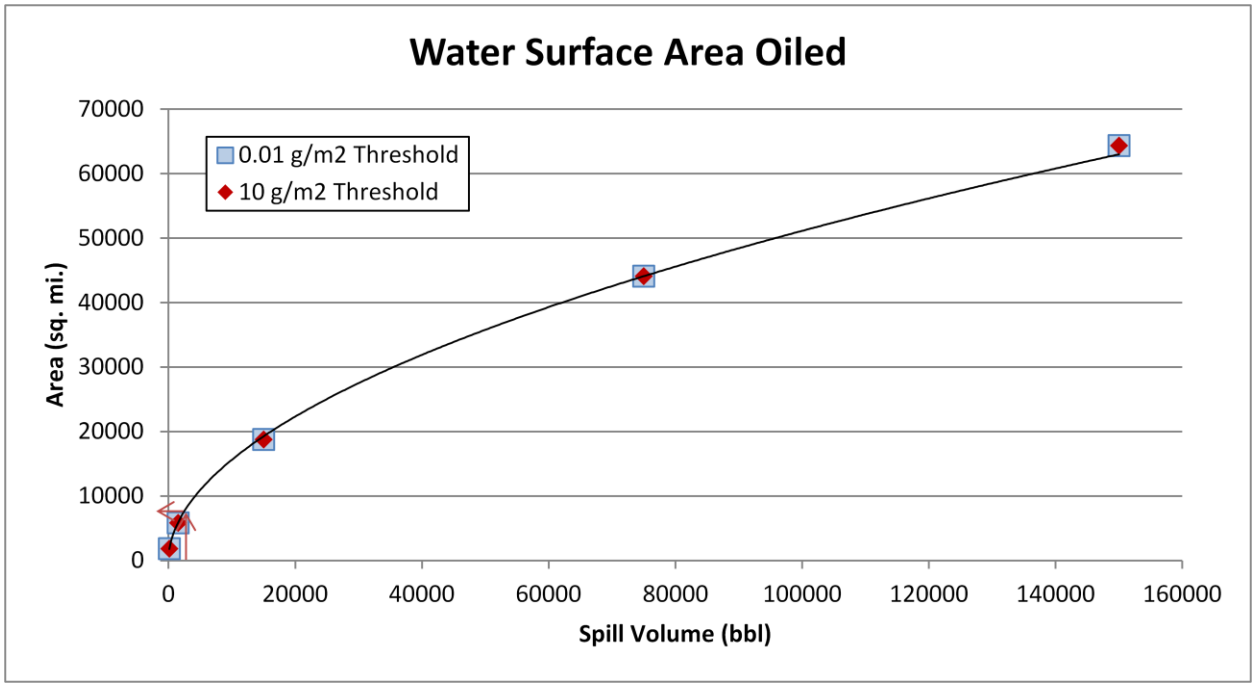


Figure 2-3a: Regression curve for estimating the amount of water surface oiling as a function of spill volume for the *Empire Gem*, showing both the ecological threshold of 10 g/m^2 and socio-economic threshold of 0.01 g/m^2, based on the model results for the *William Rockefeller*. The arrows indicate where the WCD for the *Empire Gem* falls on the curve and how the area of water surface impact can be determined for any spill volume. Note arrows are in the very lower left corner. Figure 2-3b is an enlargement of this area.

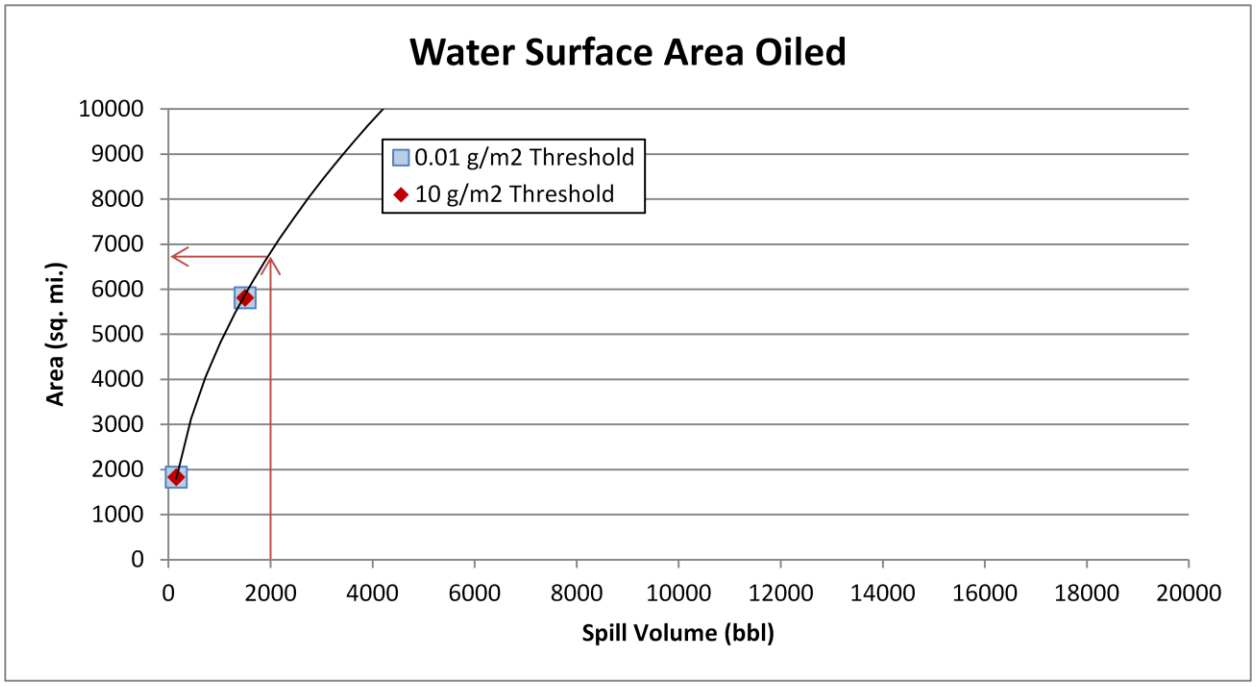


Figure 2-3b: The same regression curve as in Figure 2-3a, but zoomed in to show the WCD for the *Empire Gem*.

Potential Shoreline Impacts

Based on the modeling results for the *William Rockefeller* shorelines from as far north as Maryland to as far south as Cape Canaveral, Florida are at risk. (Refer to Figure 2-6 in the *William Rockefeller* package to see the probability of oil stranding on the shoreline at concentrations that exceed the threshold of 1 g/m^2, for the Most Probable release). However, the specific areas that would be oiled will depend on the currents and winds at the time of the oil release(s), as well as on the amount of oil released. Estimated miles of shoreline oiling above the socio-economic threshold of 1 g/m^2 and the ecological threshold of 100 g/m^2 by scenario type are shown in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4: Estimated shoreline oiling from leakage from the *Empire Gem*, based on the modeling results for the *William Rockefeller*.

Scenario Type	Volume (bbl)	Estimated Miles of Shoreline Oiling Above 1 g/m^2	Estimated Miles of Shoreline Oiling Above 100 g/m^2
Chronic	2	10	0
Episodic	20	14	0
Medium	200	18	0
Large	1,000	20	7
Worst Case Discharge	2,000	21	10

The actual shore length affected by a release will be determined by the volume of leakage and environmental conditions during an actual release. To assist planners in scaling the potential impact for different leakage volumes, a regression curve was generated for the total shoreline length oiled using the five volume scenarios for the *William Rockefeller*, as detailed in Table 2-4 and shown in Figure 2-4. Using this figure, the shore length oiled can be estimated for any spill volume from the *Empire Gem*.

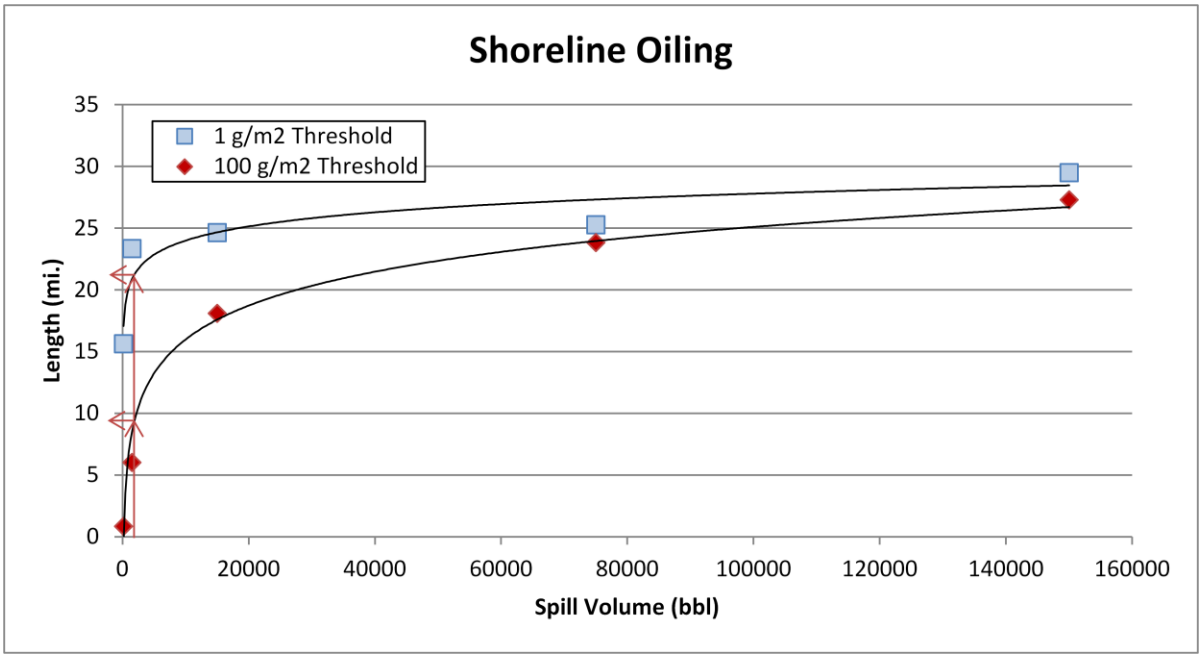


Figure 2-4a: Regression curve for estimating the amount of shoreline oiling at different thresholds as a function of spill volume for the *Empire Gem*, based on the model results for the *William Rockefeller*. The arrows indicate where the WCD for the *Empire Gem* falls on the curve and how the length of shoreline impact can be determined for any spill volume.

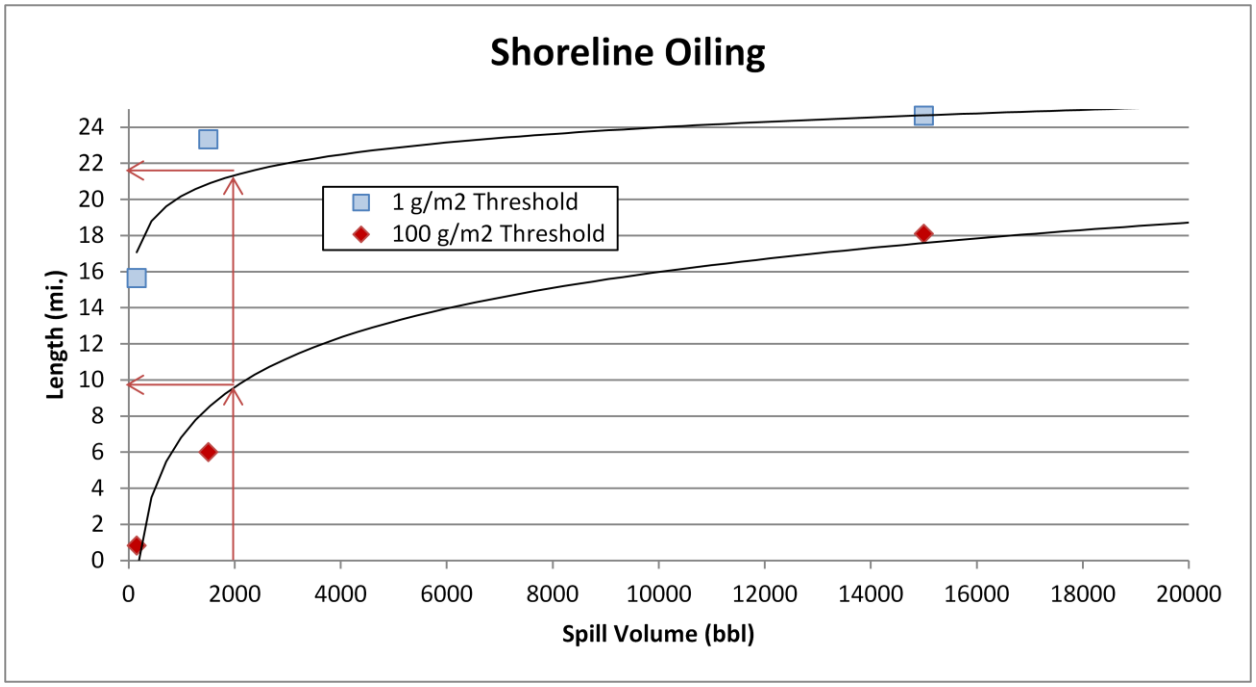


Figure 2-4b: The same regression curve as in Figure 2-4a, but zoomed in to show the WCD for the *Empire Gem*.

SECTION 3: ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES AT RISK

Ecological resources at risk from a catastrophic release of oil from the *Empire Gem* include numerous guilds of birds (Table 3-1), particularly those sensitive to surface oiling while rafting or plunge diving to feed, that are present in nearshore/offshore waters. In addition, this region is important for nesting loggerhead sea turtles, migrating marine mammals, and commercially important fish and invertebrates, including some sensitive hard-bottom habitats used by these species.

Table 3-1: Ecological resources at risk from a release of oil from the *Empire Gem*.
(FT = Federal threatened; FE = Federal endangered; ST = State threatened; SE = State endangered)

Species Group	Species Subgroup and Geography	Seasonal Presence
Seabirds	• Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore of Cape Hatteras, NC: greatest diversity of seabirds in SE U.S.; greatest density of tropical seabirds in SE U.S. Species include: shearwaters, storm petrels, Bermuda petrels • Significant percentage of the global population of black-capped petrels (FE) may be present in *Sargassum* mats off Cape Hatteras • Audubon's shearwaters (50-75% of population) concentrate along the Continental Shelf edge off NC, extending northward to the VA border (~3,800 pairs) • Seabird species groups using Mid-Atlantic U.S. waters include boobies (~300K) and alcids (tens of thousands)	OCS: Ranges by species but Mar-Nov peak Petrels off NC/VA coast during summer through early fall Shearwaters off of NC/VA in late summer
Pelagic Birds, Waterfowl, and Diving Birds	Coastal pelagic birds, waterfowl, diving birds • Outer Banks, Inshore waters NC to VA: key foraging area for gulls and terns; key migration corridor for loons and sea ducks; NC's largest population of northern gannet and red-breasted merganser • Mid-Atlantic inshore/offshore waters: 150K loons, 6K pelicans, 100s of thousands of cormorants and terns, millions of gulls	Terns, gulls present in spring/summer; Loons, sea ducks present in spring/fall; Gannets, red-breasted merganser present in winter

Sea Ducks	Sea ducks (includes mean and max distance of flocks to shore, 2009-2010 data)
	• Surf scoter - 2 nm/8 nm/Black scoter -2 nm/13 nm:
	  ○ Off NC: 0-41K surf scoter, 3.5-13K black scoter
	  ○ Off SC/GA: 0-100 surf scoter, 0-15K black scoter
	• Long-tailed duck (2 nm/25 nm)
	  ○ Off MD/DE: 2K
	• Bufflehead, mergansers, goldeneyes (<1 nm/7-14 nm)
	  ○ Off NC: 12K
	  ○ Off MD/DE: 3K
	• Mouths of DE Bay and Chesapeake Bay (especially) have high concentrations of species that are abundant over shoals (loons, pelicans, cormorants, sea ducks, gulls, terns, alcids); scoters are 10X more abundant than other species on shoals and large numbers concentrate off VA/Chesapeake Bay
		Sea ducks surveyed in winter (peak abundances); Migration from Fall to Spring (Oct-Apr)
		
		Winter use of shoals (Dec-Mar); summer use of shoals likely farther north

Shorebirds and Colonial Nesting Birds	• Outer Banks, Cape Hatteras, and Cape Lookout: globally important for coastal birds with 365+ species • Key species: Piping plover, willet, American oystercatcher, black skimmers	Colonial and beach nesters peak Apr-Aug Winter migration stop for plovers
Sea Turtles	Nesting (annual counts along shorelines with most probable impacts). Mostly occurs in NC but loggerheads can nest as far north as DE • 650+ Loggerhead (FT) • <20 Green (FT)	Nesting season: Adults: May-Sept Hatching: May-Dec

Species Group	Species Subgroup and Geography	Seasonal Presence
	• <10 Leatherback (FE) Distribution: • Offshore hot spots not well known • Young associate with *Sargassum* mats off of Cape Hatteras • Bays and sounds are foraging grounds for juvenile green, loggerhead, and Kemp's ridley (FE)	In water: Year round with Apr-Dec peak
Marine Mammals	*Baleen whales*: Primarily North Atlantic right whale (FE) and fin whale (FE) with occasional humpback whale (FE), sei whale (FE) and minke whale • Right whales are critically endangered (<400 individuals left);Coastal waters are used as a migratory pathway and border the northern extent of calving grounds *Inshore cetaceans:* Bottlenose dolphin and harbor porpoise use coastal waters out to the shelf break *Offshore cetaceans*: Pilot whale, Risso's dolphin, striped dolphin, common dolphin, Atlantic spotted dolphin, spinner dolphin, pilot whale • Often associated with shelf edge features, convergence zones (fronts), and Sargassum mats (summer) *Deep diving whales:* Sperm whale (FE), pygmy sperm whale, beaked whales (5 species present) forage in deep waters along the shelf in the potential spill area *Pinnipeds*: Harbor seals can sometimes occur as far south as NC during the winter. Harp, hooded, and gray seals have also been observed but are rare	Baleen whales present Fall-Spring. Adults migrate from feeding grounds in North Atlantic to calving grounds further south Juvenile humpbacks forage offshore during the winter Bottlenose dolphins present year round Harbor Seals present during the winter
Fish and Inverts	Coastal ocean waters support many valuable fisheries and/or species of concern in the region: • *Benthic or bottom associated*: Sea scallop, scup, black sea bass, butterfish, goosefish, scamp, horseshoe crab, tilefish, other reef species • *Midwater*: Atlantic mackerel, spanish mackerel, shortfin squid, bluefish, menhaden, spiny dogfish, smooth dogfish, • *Pelagic*: Bluefin tuna, yellowfin tuna, wahoo, dolphin fish, bigeye tuna, swordfish • *Diadromous*: Alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, Atlantic tomcod, American eel, Atlantic sturgeon (Fed. species of concern), shortnose sturgeon (FE), striped bass • *Estuarine dependent*: Southern flounder, spotted seatrout, blue crab, atlantic croaker, spot, weakfish, shrimp • *Estuarine resident*: Eastern oyster, northern quahog Important concentration/conservation areas are: • Pelagic species can be more concentrated around the shelf break and at oceanographic fronts in the region • The Point (offshore of Cape Hatteras) – Essential Fish Habitat/Habitats Areas of Particular Concern (EFH/HAPC) for coastal migratory pelagics and dolphin/wahoo • Primary nursery areas in NC bays – for estuarine dependent species *Sargassum* mats off Cape Hatteras provide foraging and shelter for juvenile fish and invertebrates	Benthic and Midwater species are present throughout the year Bluefin tunas present Fall-Spring with other pelagic fish present year round Anadromous fish migrate inshore to spawn in fresh water in the spring American eel migrates offshore to spawn in the winter Estuarine dependent fish migrate offshore in the fall/winter to spawn; juveniles and adults use estuaries during the spring/summer
Benthic Habitats	Submerged aquatic vegetation is critical to numerous species and occurs inside of bays and sounds throughout the region	Year round

Species Group	Species Subgroup and Geography	Seasonal Presence
	Scattered hard-bottom sites are located off NC and are considered HAPC for reef-associated fishes (including the areas listed above)	

The Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) atlases for the potentially impacted coastal areas from a leak from the *Empire Gem* are generally available at each U.S. Coast Guard Sector. They can also be downloaded at: http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/esi. These maps show detailed spatial information on the distribution of sensitive shoreline habitats, biological resources, and human-use resources. The tables on the back of the maps provide more detailed life-history information for each species and location. The ESI atlases should be consulted to assess the potential environmental resources at risk for specific spill scenarios. In addition, the Geographic Response Plans within the Area Contingency Plans prepared by the Area Committee for each U.S. Coast Guard Sector have detailed information on the nearshore and shoreline ecological resources at risk and should be consulted.

Ecological Risk Factors

Risk Factor 3: Impacts to Ecological Resources at Risk (EcoRAR)

Ecological resources include plants and animals (e.g., fish, birds, invertebrates, and mammals), as well as the habitats in which they live. All impact factors are evaluated for both the Worst Case and the Most Probable Discharge oil release from the wreck. Risk factors for ecological resources at risk (EcoRAR) are divided into three categories:

- Impacts to the water column and resources in the water column;
- Impacts to the water surface and resources on the water surface; and
- Impacts to the shoreline and resources on the shoreline.

The impacts from an oil release from the wreck would depend greatly on the direction in which the oil slick moves, which would, in turn, depend on wind direction and currents at the time of and after the oil release. Impacts are characterized in the risk analysis based on the likelihood of any measurable impact, as well as the degree of impact that would be expected if there is an impact. The measure of the degree of impact is based on the mean case for which there is at least some impact. The mean case is the "middle case" – half of the cases with significant impacts have less impact than this case, and half have more.

For each of the three ecological resources at risk categories, risk is defined as:

- The **probability of oiling** over a certain threshold (i.e., the likelihood that there will be an impact to ecological resources over a certain minimal amount); and
- The **degree of oiling** (the magnitude or amount of that impact).

As a reminder, the ecological impact thresholds are: 1 ppb aromatics for water column impacts; 10 g/m^2 for water surface impacts; and 100 g/m^2 for shoreline impacts.

In the following sections, the definition of low, medium, and high for each ecological risk factor is provided. Also, the classification for the *Empire Gem* is provided, both as text and as shading of the applicable degree of risk bullet, for the WCD release of 2,000 bbl and a border around the applicable

degree of risk bullet for the Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl. Please note: The probability of oiling cannot be determined using the regression curves; probability can only be determined from the 200 model runs. Thus, the modeling results and regression curves for the *William Rockefeller* are used to estimate the values used in the risk scoring for the **degree of oiling only**.

Risk Factor 3A: Water Column Impacts to EcoRAR

Water column impacts occur beneath the water surface. The ecological resources at risk for water column impacts are fish, marine mammals, and invertebrates (e.g., shellfish, and small organisms that are food for larger organisms in the food chain). These organisms can be affected by toxic components in the oil. The threshold for water column impact to ecological resources at risk is a dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons concentration of 1 ppb (i.e., 1 part total dissolved aromatics per one billion parts water). Dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons are the most toxic part of the oil. At this concentration and above, one would expect impacts to organisms in the water column.

Risk Factor 3A-1: Water Column Probability of Oiling of EcoRAR (not scored)

This risk factor reflects the probability that at least 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column would be contaminated with a high enough concentration of oil to cause ecological impacts. The three risk scores for water column oiling probability are:

- **Low Oiling Probability:** Probability = <10%
- **Medium Oiling Probability:** Probability = 10 – 50%
- **High Oiling Probability:** Probability > 50%

Risk Factor 3A-2: Water Column Degree of Oiling of EcoRAR

The degree of oiling of the water column reflects the total volume of water that would be contaminated by oil at a concentration high enough to cause impacts. The three categories of impact are:

- **Low Impact:** impact on less than 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column at the threshold level
- **Medium Impact**: impact on 0.2 to 200 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column at the threshold level
- **High Impact:** impact on more than 200 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column at the threshold level

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling for water column ecological resources for the WCD of 2,000 bbl because the mean volume of water contaminated in the model runs was 2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column. For the Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl, the *Empire Gem* is classified as Low Risk for degree of oiling because the mean volume of water contaminated in the model runs was 0 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column.

Risk Factor 3B: Water Surface Impacts to EcoRAR

Ecological resources at risk at the water surface include surface feeding and diving sea birds, sea turtles, and marine mammals. These organisms can be affected by the toxicity of the oil as well as from coating with oil. The threshold for water surface oiling impact to ecological resources at risk is 10 g/m^2 (10 grams of floating oil per square meter of water surface). At this concentration and above, one would expect impacts to birds and other animals that spend time on the water surface.

Risk Factor 3B-1: Water Surface Probability of Oiling of EcoRAR (not scored)

This risk factor reflects the probability that at least 1,000 mi^2 of the water surface would be affected by enough oil to cause impacts to ecological resources. The three risk scores for oiling are:

- **Low Oiling Probability:** Probability = <10%
- **Medium Oiling Probability:** Probability = 10 – 50%
- **High Oiling Probability:** Probability > 50%

Risk Factor 3B-2: Water Surface Degree of Oiling of EcoRAR

The degree of oiling of the water surface reflects the total amount of oil that would affect the water surface in the event of a discharge from the vessel. The three categories of impact are:

- **Low Impact:** less than 1,000 mi^2 of water surface impact at the threshold level
- **Medium Impact:** 1,000 to 10,000 mi^2 of water surface impact at the threshold level
- **High Impact:** more than 10,000 mi^2 of water surface impact at the threshold level

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling for water surface ecological resources for the WCD because the mean area of water contaminated in the model runs was 6,800 mi^2. It is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling for the Most Probable Discharge because the mean area of water contaminated was 2,100 mi^2.

Risk Factor 3C: Shoreline Impacts to EcoRAR

The impacts to different types of shorelines vary based on their type and the organisms that live on them. For the modeled wrecks, shorelines were weighted by their degree of sensitivity to oiling. Wetlands are the most sensitive (weighted as "3" in the impact modeling), rocky and gravel shores are moderately sensitive (weighted as "2"), and sand beaches (weighted as "1") are the least sensitive to ecological impacts of oil. In this risk analysis for the *Empire Gem*, shorelines have NOT been weighted by their degree of sensitivity to oiling because these data are available only for modeled vessels. Therefore, the impacts are evaluated only on the total number of shoreline miles oiled as determined from the regression curve.

Risk Factor 3C-1: Shoreline Probability of Oiling of EcoRAR (not scored)

This risk factor reflects the probability that the shoreline would be coated by enough oil to cause impacts to shoreline organisms. The threshold for shoreline oiling impacts to ecological resources at risk is 100 g/m^2 (i.e., 100 grams of oil per square meter of shoreline). The three risk scores for oiling are:

- **Low Oiling Probability:** Probability = <10%
- **Medium Oiling Probability:** Probability = 10 – 50%
- **High Oiling Probability:** Probability > 50%

Risk Factor 3C-2: Shoreline Degree of Oiling of EcoRAR

The degree of oiling of the shoreline reflects the length of shorelines oiled by at least 100 g/m^2 in the event of a discharge from the vessel. The three categories of impact are:

- **Low Impact:** less than 10 miles of shoreline impacted at the threshold level
- **Medium Impact:** 10 - 100 miles of shoreline impacted at the threshold level

- **High Impact:** more than 100 miles of shoreline impacted at the threshold level

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling for shoreline ecological resources for the WCD because the mean length of shoreline contaminated in the model runs was 10 miles. It is classified as Low Risk for the Most Probable Discharge because the mean length of shoreline contaminated in the model runs was 0 miles.

Considering the modeled risk scores and the ecological resources at risk, the ecological risk from potential releases of the WCD of 2,000 bbl of heavy fuel oil from the *Empire Gem* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 3-2:

- Water column resources – Low, because the small volume of water column impacts occurred mostly far offshore where sensitive water column resources are less concentrated
- Water surface resources – Medium, because of the large number of wintering, nesting, and migratory birds that use ocean, coastal, and estuarine habitats at risk, sea turtle concentrations in *Sargassum* habitat, and the persistence of tarballs that can be transported long distances. It should be noted that oil on the surface will not be continuous but rather be broken and patchy and in the form of sheens, tarballs, and streamers
- Shoreline resources – Low, because most of the few miles of shoreline at risk is composed of sand beaches which are relatively easy to clean, although these beaches are used by many shorebirds and sea turtles for nesting and many shorebirds as wintering and migratory stopovers

Table 3-2: Ecological risk factor scores for the **Worst Case Discharge of 2,000 bbl** of heavy fuel oil from the *Empire Gem*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
3A-1: Water Column Probability EcoRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	**Low**
3A-2: Water Column Degree EcoRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
3B-1: Water Surface Probability EcoRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	**Med**
3B-2: Water Surface Degree EcoRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	The mean area of water contaminated above 10 g/m^2 was 6,800 mi^2	
3C-1: Shoreline Probability EcoRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	**Low**
3C-2: Shoreline Degree EcoRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 100 g/m^2 was 10 mi	

For the Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl of heavy fuel oil, the ecological risk from potential releases from the *Empire Gem* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 3-3:

- Water column resources – Low, because of the very small area of water column impacts that occurred mostly far offshore where water column resources are less concentrated
- Water surface resources – Medium, because the area swept by persistent oil could affect the very large number of wintering, nesting, and migratory birds that use ocean, coastal, and estuarine habitats at risk, sea turtle concentrations in *Sargassum* habitat, and the persistence of tarballs that can be transported long distances. It should be noted that oil on the surface will not be continuous but rather be broken and patchy and in the form of sheens, tarballs, and streamers
- Shoreline resources – Low, because little to no oil is predicted to strand on the shoreline

Table 3-3: Ecological risk factor scores for the **Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl** of heavy fuel oil from the *Empire Gem*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
3A-1: Water Column Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	Low
3A-2: Water Column Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 0 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
3B-1: Water Surface Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	Med
3B-2: Water Surface Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean area of water contaminated above 10 g/m^2 was 2,100 mi^2	
3C-1: Shoreline Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	Low
3C-2: Shoreline Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 100 g/m^2 was 0 mi	

SECTION 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESOURCES AT RISK

In addition to natural resource impacts, spills from sunken wrecks have the potential to cause significant social and economic impacts. Socio-economic resources potentially at risk from oiling are listed in Table 4-1 and shown in Figures 4-1 and 4-2. The potential economic impacts include disruption of coastal economic activities such as commercial and recreational fishing, boating, vacationing, commercial shipping, and other activities that may become claims following a spill.

Socio-economic resources in the areas potentially affected by a release from the *Empire Gem* include recreational beaches on the Outer Banks of North Carolina and the Cape Hatteras National Seashore that very highly utilized during summer, and are still in use during spring and fall for shore fishing. This area also has hotspots for chartered fishing vessels and recreational fishing parties. Many areas along the entire potential spill zone are widely popular seaside resorts and support recreational activities such as boating, diving, sightseeing, sailing, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

A release could impact shipping lanes, which accommodate two significant ports in North Carolina – Morehead City and Wilmington with a total of 635 port calls and 22.3 million tonnage annually, of which over 40% of which are tankers. Commercial fishing is economically important to the region. A release could impact fishing fleets that utilize the waters around and outside the Outer Banks, yielding annual catches of about $64.7 million.

In addition to the ESI atlases, the Geographic Response Plans within the Area Contingency Plans prepared by the Area Committee for each U.S. Coast Guard Sector have detailed information on important socio-economic resources at risk.

Spill response costs for a release of oil from the *Empire Gem* would be dependent on volume of oil released and specific areas impacted. The specific shoreline impacts and spread of the oil would determine the response required and the costs for that response.

Table 4-1: Socio-economic resources at risk from a release of oil from the *Empire Gem*.

Resource Type	Resource Name	Economic Activities
National Seashore	Cape Hatteras National Seashore, NC	National seashores provide recreation for local and tourist populations while preserving and protecting the nation's natural shoreline treasures. National seashores are coastal areas federally designated as being of natural and recreational significance as a preserved area. Located in the Outer Banks, Cape Hatteras is known for its Bodie Island and Cape Hatteras Lighthouses. Popular recreation activities include windsurfing, birdwatching, fishing, shell collecting, and kayaking. The barrier island provides refuge for the endangered piping plover, seabeach amaranth, and sea turtles.
National Wildlife Refuges	Back Bay NWR (VA) Mackay Island NWR (NC) Currituck NWR (NC) Pea Island NWR (NC) Cedar Island NWR (NC)	National wildlife refuges in three states may be impacted. These federally-managed and protected lands provide refuges and conservation areas for sensitive species and habitats.

Resource Type	Resource Name	Economic Activities
	Waccamaw NWR (SC)	
Commercial Fishing	A number of fishing fleets use the New York Bight area and surrounding waters for commercial fishing purposes.	
	Beaufort-Morehead City	Total Landings (2010): $9.2M
	Belhaven-Washington	Total Landings (2010): $3.7M
	Elizabeth City	Total Landings (2010): $5.4M
	Engelhard-Swanquarter	Total Landings (2010): $10.6M
	Oriental-Vandemere	Total Landings (2010): $8.4M
	Sneads Ferry-Swansboro	Total Landings (2010): $5.4M
	Wanchese-Stumpy Point	Total Landings (2010): $22.0M
Ports	There are two significant commercial ports in North Carolina that could potentially be impacted by spillage and spill response activities. The port call numbers below are for large vessels only. There are many more, smaller vessels (under 400 GRT) that also use these ports.	
	Morehead City, NC	85 port calls annually
	Wilmington, NC	550 port calls annually

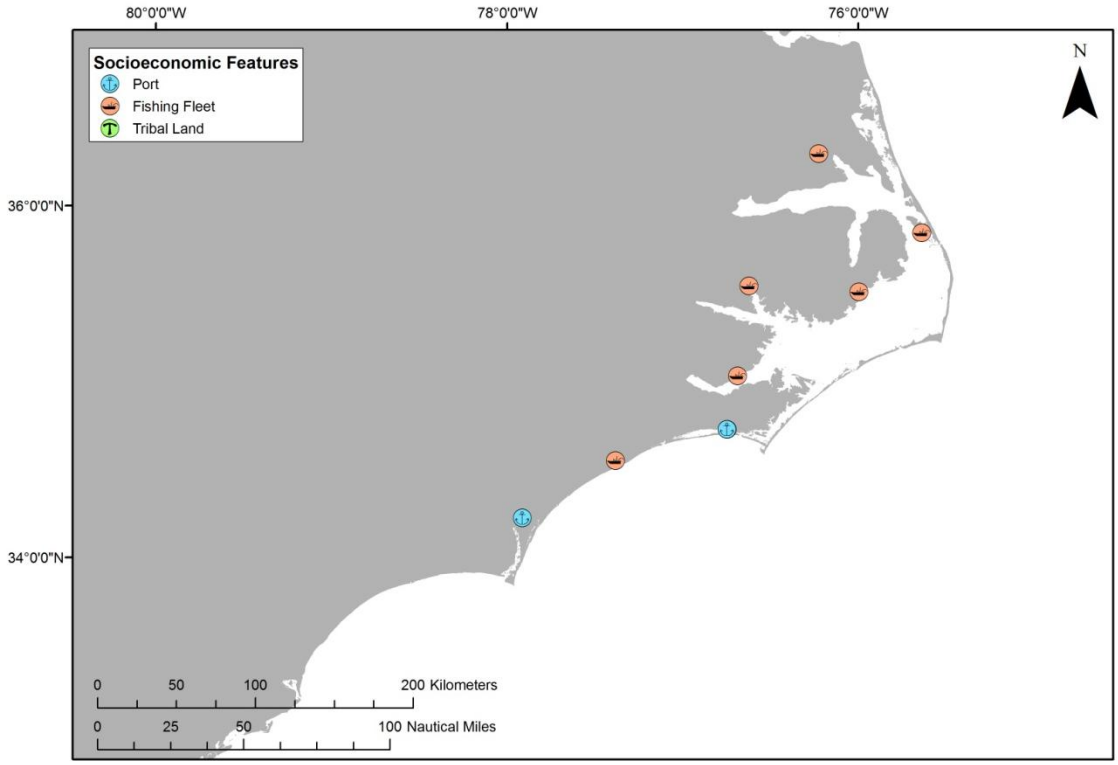


Figure 4-1: Tribal lands, ports, and commercial fishing fleets at risk from a release from the *Empire Gem*. (Note that there are no tribal lands affected.)

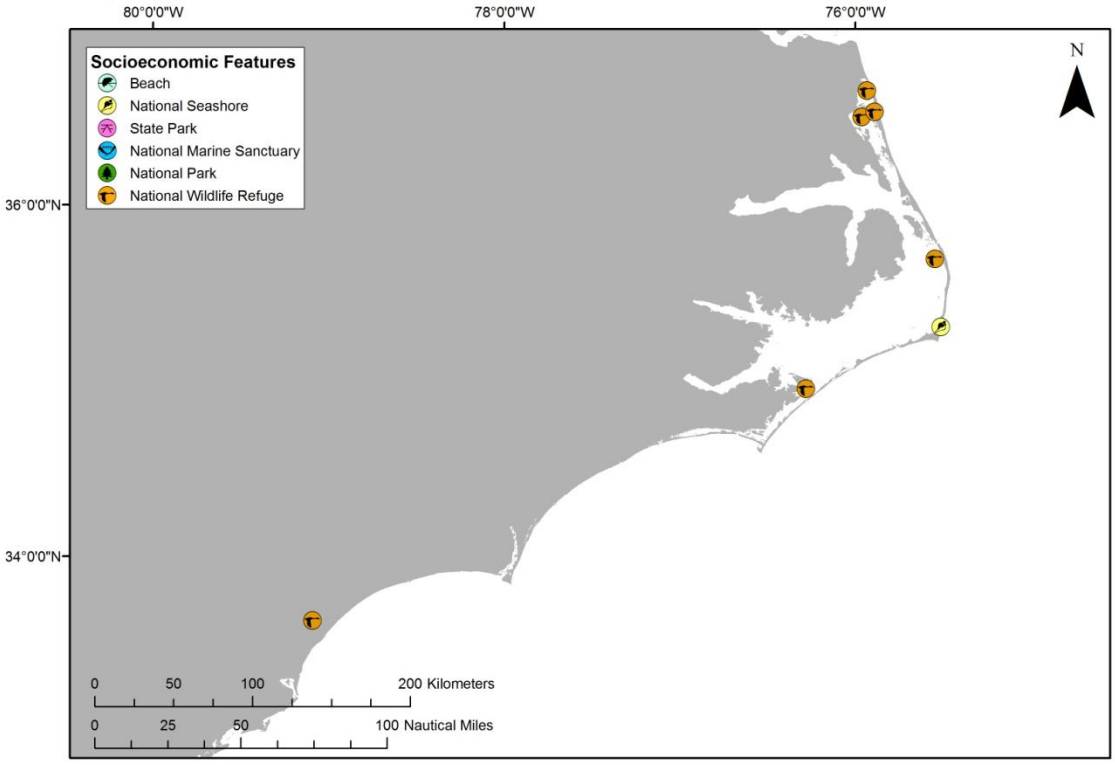


Figure 4-2: Beaches, coastal state parks, and Federal protected areas at risk from a release from the *Empire Gem*. (Note that there are no beaches or state parks at risk.)

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Risk Factor 4: Impacts to Socio-economic Resources at Risk (SRAR)

Socio-economic resources at risk (SRAR) include potentially impacted resources that have some economic value, including commercial and recreational fishing, tourist beaches, private property, etc. All impact factors are evaluated for both the Worst Case and the Most Probable Discharge oil release from the wreck. Risk factors for socio-economic resources at risk are divided into three categories:

- **Water Column:** Impacts to the water column and to socio-economic resources in the water column (i.e., fish and invertebrates that have economic value);
- **Water Surface:** Impacts to the water surface and resources on the water surface (i.e., boating and commercial fishing); and
- **Shoreline:** Impacts to the shoreline and resources on the shoreline (i.e., beaches, real property).

The impacts from an oil release from the wreck would depend greatly on the direction in which the oil slick moves, which would, in turn, depend on wind direction and currents at the time of and after the oil release. Impacts are characterized in the risk analysis based on the likelihood of any measurable impact, as well as the degree of impact that would be expected if there were one. The measure of the degree of impact is based on the mean case for which there is at least some impact. The mean case is the "middle case" – half of the cases with significant impacts have less impact than this case, and half have more.

For each of the three socio-economic resources at risk categories, risk is classified with regard to:

- The **probability of oiling** over a certain threshold (i.e., the likelihood that there will be exposure to socio-economic resources over a certain minimal amount known to cause impacts); and
- The **degree of oiling** (the magnitude or amount of that exposure over the threshold known to cause impacts).

As a reminder, the socio-economic impact thresholds are: 1 ppb aromatics for water column impacts; 0.01 g/m^2 for water surface impacts; and 1 g/m^2 for shoreline impacts.

In the following sections, the definition of low, medium, and high for each socio-economic risk factor is provided. Also, in the text classification for the *Empire Gem*, shading indicates the degree of risk for a WCD release of 2,000 bbl and a border indicates degree of risk for the Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl. Please note: The probability of oiling cannot be determined using the regression curves; probability can only be determined from the 200 model runs. Thus, the modeling results and regression curves for the *William Rockefeller* are used to estimate the values used in the risk scoring for the **degree of oiling only**.

Risk Factor 4A-1: Water Column: Probability of Oiling of SRAR (not scored)

This risk factor reflects the probability that at least 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column would be contaminated with a high enough concentration of oil to cause socio-economic impacts. The threshold for water column impact to socio-economic resources at risk is an oil concentration of 1 ppb (i.e., 1 part oil per one billion parts water). At this concentration and above, one would expect impacts and potential tainting to socio-economic resources (e.g., fish and shellfish) in the water column; this concentration is used as a screening threshold for both the ecological and socio-economic risk factors.

The three risk scores for oiling are:

- **Low Oiling Probability:** Probability = <10%
- **Medium Oiling Probability:** Probability = 10 – 50%
- **High Oiling Probability:** Probability > 50%

Risk Factor 4A-2: Water Column Degree of Oiling of SRAR

The degree of oiling of the water column reflects the total amount of oil that would affect the water column in the event of a discharge from the vessel. The three categories of impact are:

- **Low Impact:** impact on less than 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column at the threshold level
- **Medium Impact:** impact on 0.2 to 200 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column at the threshold level
- **High Impact:** impact on more than 200 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column at the threshold level

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling for water column socio-economic resources for the WCD of 2,000 bbl because the mean volume of water contaminated in the model runs was 43 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column. For the Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl, the

Empire Gem is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling because the mean volume of water contaminated was 4 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column.

Risk Factor 4B-1: Water Surface Probability of Oiling of SRAR (not scored)

This risk factor reflects the probability that at least 1,000 mi^2 of the water surface would be affected by enough oil to cause impacts to socio-economic resources. The three risk scores for oiling are:

- **Low Oiling Probability:** Probability = <10%
- **Medium Oiling Probability:** Probability = 10 – 50%
- **High Oiling Probability:** Probability > 50%

The threshold level for water surface impacts to socio-economic resources at risk is 0.01 g/m^2 (i.e., 0.01 grams of floating oil per square meter of water surface). At this concentration and above, one would expect impacts to socio-economic resources on the water surface.

Risk Factor 4B-2: Water Surface Degree of Oiling of SRAR

The degree of oiling of the water surface reflects the total amount of oil that would affect the water surface in the event of a discharge from the vessel. The three categories of impact are:

- **Low Impact:** less than 1,000 mi^2 of water surface impact at the threshold level
- **Medium Impact:** 1,000 to 10,000 mi^2 of water surface impact at the threshold level
- **High Impact:** more than 10,000 mi^2 of water surface impact at the threshold level

The *Empire Gem* is classified as High Risk for degree of oiling for water surface socio-economic resources for the WCD because the mean area of water contaminated in the model runs was 61,760 mi^2. The *Empire Gem* is classified as High Risk for degree of oiling for water surface socio-economic resources for the Most Probable Discharge because the mean area of water contaminated was 19,000 mi^2.

Risk Factor 4C: Shoreline Impacts to SRAR

The impacts to different types of shorelines vary based on economic value. For the modeled wrecks, shorelines have been weighted by their degree of sensitivity to oiling. Sand beaches are the most economically valued shorelines (weighted as "3" in the impact analysis), rocky and gravel shores are moderately valued (weighted as "2"), and wetlands are the least economically valued shorelines (weighted as "1"). In this risk analysis for the *Empire Gem*, shorelines have NOT been weighted by their degree of sensitivity to oiling because these data are available only for modeled vessels. Therefore, the impacts are evaluated only on the total number of shoreline miles oiled as determined from the regression curve.

Risk Factor 4C-1: Shoreline Probability of Oiling of SRAR (not scored)

This risk factor reflects the probability that the shoreline would be coated by enough oil to cause impacts to shoreline users. The threshold for impacts to shoreline SRAR is 1 g/m^2 (i.e., 1 gram of oil per square meter of shoreline). The three risk scores for oiling are:

- **Low Oiling Probability:** Probability = <10%
- **Medium Oiling Probability:** Probability = 10 – 50%
- **High Oiling Probability:** Probability > 50%

Risk Factor 4C-2: Shoreline Degree of Oiling of SRAR

The degree of oiling of the shoreline reflects the total amount of oil that would affect the shoreline in the event of a discharge from the vessel. The three categories of impact are:

- **Low Impact:** less than 10 miles of shoreline impacted at threshold level
- **Medium Impact:** 10 - 100 miles of shoreline impacted at threshold level
- **High Impact:** more than 100 miles of shoreline impacted at threshold level

The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling for shoreline socio-economic resources for the WCD because the mean length of shoreline contaminated in the model runs was 70 miles. The *Empire Gem* is classified as Medium Risk for oiling degree for shoreline socio-economic resources for the Most Probable Discharge because the mean length of shoreline contaminated was 58 miles.

Considering the modeled risk scores and the socio-economic resources at risk, the socio-economic risk from potential releases of the WCD of 2,000 bbl of heavy fuel oil from the *Empire Gem* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 4-2:

- Water column resources – Low, because there would be a low impact to important fishing grounds
- Water surface resources – High, because a large offshore area would be covered with oil, affecting port traffic and other offshore activities. It should be noted that oil on the surface will not be continuous but rather be broken and patchy and in the form of sheens, tarballs, and streamers
- Shoreline resources – Medium, because a moderate amount of shoreline would be impacted with the persistent oil and tarballs and would be relatively easy to clean, although there are a large number of potentially vulnerable socio-economic resources located along the shoreline

Table 4-2: Socio-economic risk factor ranks for the **Worst Case Discharge of 2,000 bbl** of heavy fuel oil from the *Empire Gem*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
4A-1: Water Column Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	Low
4A-2: Water Column Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	**Medium**	High	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 43 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
4B-1: Water Surface Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	High
4B-2: Water Surface Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	**High**	The mean area of water contaminated above 0.01 g/m^2 was 62,000 mi^2	
4C-1: Shoreline Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	Med
4C-2: Shoreline Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	**Medium**	High	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 1 g/m^2 was 70 mi	

For the Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl, the socio-economic risk from potential releases of heavy fuel oil from the *Empire Gem* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 4-3:

- Water column resources – Low, because there would be a low impact to important fishing grounds
- Water surface resources – High, because a large offshore area would be covered with oil, affecting port traffic and other offshore activities. It should be noted that oil on the surface will not be continuous but rather be broken and patchy and in the form of sheens, tarballs, and streamers
- Shoreline resources – Medium, because a moderate amount of shoreline would be impacted with the persistent oil and tarballs and would be relatively easy to clean, although there are a large number of potentially vulnerable socio-economic resources located along the shoreline

Table 4-3: Socio-economic risk factor ranks for the **Most Probable Discharge of 200 bbl** of heavy fuel oil from the *Empire Gem*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
4A-1: Water Column Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	Low
4A-2: Water Column Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	**Medium**	High	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 4 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
4B-1: Water Surface Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	High
4B-2: Water Surface Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	**High**	The mean area of water contaminated above 0.01 g/m^2 was 19,000 mi^2	
4C-1: Shoreline Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	N/A: Only available for modeled vessels	Med
4C-2: Shoreline Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	**Medium**	High	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 1 g/m^2 was 58 mi	

SECTION 5: OVERALL RISK ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT, MONITORING, OR REMEDIATION

The overall risk assessment for the *Empire Gem* is comprised of a compilation of several components that reflect the best available knowledge about this particular site. Those components are reflected in the previous sections of this document and are:

- Vessel casualty information and how site formation processes have worked on this vessel
- Ecological resources at risk
- Socio-economic resources at risk
- Other complicating factors (war graves, other hazardous cargo, etc.)

Table 5-1 summarizes the screening-level risk assessment scores for the different risk factors, as discussed in the previous sections. As noted in Sections 3 and 4, each of the ecological and socio-economic risk factors each has two components, probability and degree. Please note: The probability of oiling cannot be determined using the regression curves; probability can only be determined from the 200 model runs. Thus, the modeling results and regression curves for the *William Rockefeller* were used to estimate the values used in the risk scoring for the **degree of oiling only**.

In order to make the scoring more uniform and replicable between wrecks, a value was assigned to each of the 7 criteria. This assessment has a total of 7 criteria (based on table 5-1) with 3 possible scores for each criteria (L, M, H). Each was assigned a point value of L=1, M=2, H=3. The total possible score is 21 points, and the minimum score is 7. The resulting category summaries are:

Low Priority	7-11
Medium Priority	12-14
High Priority	15-21

For the Worst Case Discharge, *Empire Gem* scores Medium with 12 points; for the Most Probable Discharge, *Empire Gem* also scores Medium with 12 points. Under the National Contingency Plan, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Regional Response Team (RRT) have the primary authority and responsibility to plan, prepare for, and respond to oil spills in U.S. waters. Based on the technical review of available information, NOAA proposes the following recommendations for the *Empire Gem*. The final determination rests with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Empire Gem	**Possible NOAA Recommendations**
	Wreck should be considered for further assessment to determine the vessel condition, amount of oil onboard, and feasibility of oil removal action
	Location is unknown; Use surveys of opportunity to attempt to locate this vessel and gather more information on the vessel condition
✓	Conduct active monitoring to look for releases or changes in rates of releases
✓	Be noted in the Area Contingency Plans so that if a mystery spill is reported in the general area, this vessel could be investigated as a source
✓	Conduct outreach efforts with the technical and recreational dive community as well as commercial and recreational fishermen who frequent the area, to gain awareness of changes in the site

If the U.S. Coast Guard does determine to assess this wreck, it is recommended that they contact NOAA archaeologists at *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary as a potential option for collaborative work and additional archaeological surveys of this wreck.

As noted in the Archaeological Assessment, this vessel is of historic significance and will require appropriate actions be taken under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the Sunken Military Craft Act (SMCA) prior to any actions that could impact the integrity of the vessel. The site is also considered a war grave and appropriate actions should be undertaken to minimize disturbance to the site.

Table 5-1: Summary of risk factors for the *Empire Gem*.

Vessel Risk Factors		Data Quality Score	Comments		Risk Score
Pollution Potential Factors	A1: Oil Volume (total bbl)	Medium	Maximum of 1,905 bbl, vessel is reported to be leaking		**Med**
	A2: Oil Type	High	Cargo is heavy fuel oil, a Group IV oil type		
	B: Wreck Clearance	High	Vessel reported as partially cleared		
	C1: Burning of the Ship	High	Fire and explosion was reported		
	C2: Oil on Water	High	Oil was reported on the water, amount is not known		
	D1: Nature of Casualty	High	Multiple torpedoes, severe explosion		
	D2: Structural Breakup	High	The vessel broke in two at the time of sinking		
Archaeological Assessment	Archaeological Assessment	High	Detailed sinking records and site assessments of this ship exist, assessment is believed to be very accurate		**Not Scored**
Operational Factors	Wreck Orientation	Low	The bow is inverted and the stern is upright		**Not Scored**
	Depth	Low	The wreck is 145 feet deep		
	Visual or Remote Sensing Confirmation of Site Condition	Low	The wreck is a technical diving and popular fishing site		
	Other Hazardous Materials Onboard	Medium	No		
	Munitions Onboard	High	Yes, for onboard weapons		
	Gravesite (Civilian/Military)	High	Yes		
	Historical Protection Eligibility (NHPA/SMCA)	High	Yes both NHPA and SMCA		
				WCD	**Most Probable**
Ecological Resources	3A: Water Column Resources	High	Area of water column affected above thresholds are relatively small and far offshore where sensitive resources are less concentrated	**Low**	**Low**
	3B: Water Surface Resources	High	Persistent tarballs can travel long distances posing risks to birds and sea turtles, esp. when concentrated in convergence zones and *Sargassum*	**Med**	**Med**
	3C: Shore Resources	High	Very little shoreline oiling likely; mostly on sand beaches which are easy to clean	**Low**	**Low**
Socio-Economic Resources	4A: Water Column Resources	High	Low impact to a relatively small area of important fishing grounds	**Low**	**Low**
	4B: Water Surface Resources	High	A large offshore area would be covered with oil, affecting port traffic and other offshore activities	**High**	**High**
	4C: Shore Resources	High	A moderate amount of shoreline would be impacted with the persistent oil and tarballs and would be relatively easy to clean, although there are a large number of potentially vulnerable socio-economic resources located along the shoreline	**Med**	**Med**
Summary Risk Scores				**12**	**12**