Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Office of Response and Restoration

Screening Level Risk Assessment Package

USS *Neches*

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National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

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Photo: Photograph of USS *Neches*
Source: http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/AO/AO-5_Neches.html

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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.

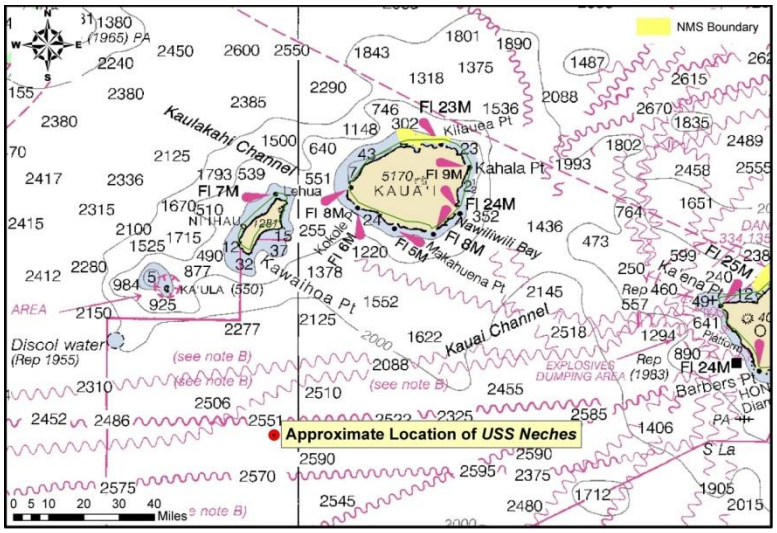
The potential polluting shipwrecks were identified through searching a broad variety of historical sources. NOAA then worked with Research Planning, Inc., RPS ASA, and Environmental Research Consulting to conduct the modeling forecasts, and the ecological and environmental resources at risk assessments.

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: USS *Neches*

The oiler USS *Neches*, torpedoed and sunk during World War II off the coast of Kaua'i, Hawaii 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 USS *Neches*, 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.



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	Med	Med
	3B: Water Surface Resources	Low	Low
	3C: Shore Resources	Low	Low
Socio-Economic Resources	4A: Water Column Resources	Med	Low
	4B: Water Surface Resources	High	Med
	4C: Shore Resources	High	High
Summary Risk Scores		14	12

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, USS *Neches* scores Medium with 14 points; for the Most Probable Discharge (10% of the Worse Case volume), USS *Neches* also scores Medium with 12 points. Given these scores, NOAA would typically recommend that this site be considered for further assessment. However, with the medium/low level of data certainty and that the location of this vessel is unknown, NOAA recommends that surveys of opportunity be used to attempt to locate this vessel and that general notations are made 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. 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 localized spills in the general area where the vessel is believed lost.

The determination of each risk factor is explained in the document. This summary table is found on page 38.

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

Vessel Particulars

Official Name: USS *Neches* (AO-5)

Official Number: Unknown

Vessel Type: Military vessel

Vessel Class: Oiler (Kanawha Class) Fuel Ship No. 17

Former Names: Unknown

Year Built: 1919

Builder: Boston Navy Yard, Charlestown, MA

Builder's Hull Number: 5

Flag: American

Owner at Loss: U.S. Navy

Controlled by: Unknown **Chartered to:** Unknown

Operated by: Unknown

Homeport: San Diego, CA

Length: 476 feet **Beam:** 56 feet **Depth:** 26 feet

Gross Tonnage: 14,500 **Net Tonnage:** Unknown

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

Bunker Type: Marine diesel **Bunker Capacity (bbl):** Unknown

Average Bunker Consumption (bbl) per 24 hours: Unknown

Liquid Cargo Capacity (bbl): 55,700 **Dry Cargo Capacity:** Unknown

Tank or Hold Description: Unknown

Casualty Information

Port Departed: Pearl Harbor, HI

Destination Port: San Diego, CA

Date Departed: January 22, 1942

Date Lost: January 22, 1942

Number of Days Sailing: 1

Cause of Sinking: Act of War (Torpedoes)

Latitude (DD): 21.01667

Longitude (DD): -160.1

Nautical Miles to Shore: 46

Nautical Miles to NMS: 79

Nautical Miles to MPA: 45

Nautical Miles to Fisheries: Unknown

Approximate Water Depth (Ft): 15,500

Bottom Type: Unknown

Is There a Wreck at This Location? Unknown, the wreck has never been located or surveyed

Wreck Orientation: Unknown

Vessel Armament: Two 5-in guns, two 3-in guns

Cargo Carried when Lost: 55,700 bbl of fuel oil

Cargo Oil Carried (bbl): 55,700

Cargo Oil Type: Unknown fuel oil

Probable Fuel Oil Remaining (bbl): Unknown, ≤ 12,000

Fuel Type: Marine diesel

Total Oil Carried (bbl): ≤ 67,700

Dangerous Cargo or Munitions: Yes

Munitions Carried: Munitions for onboard weapons

Demolished after Sinking: No

Salvaged: No

Cargo Lost: Yes

Reportedly Leaking: No

Historically Significant: Yes

Gravesite: Yes

Salvage Owner: Not known if any

Wreck Location

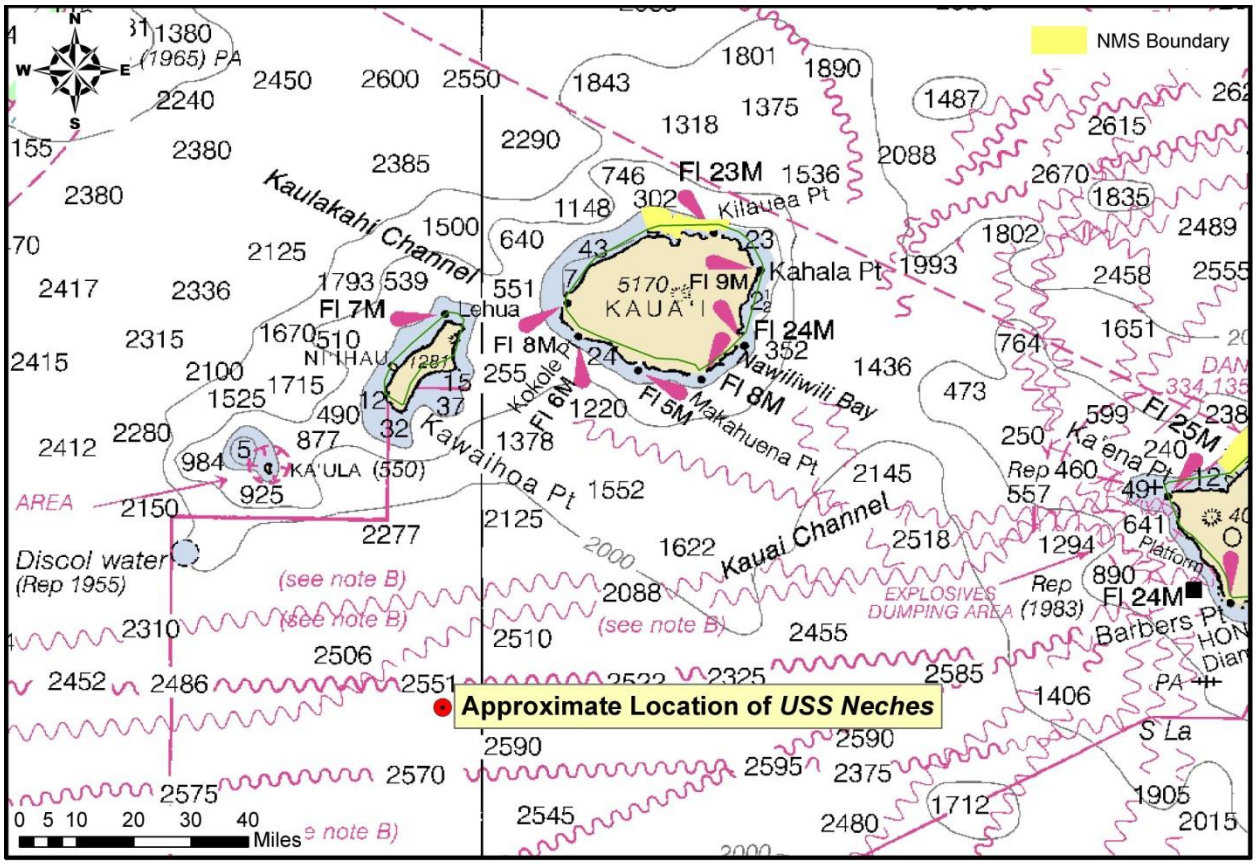


Chart Number: 540

Casualty Narrative

"The first *Neches* (AO-5) was laid down 8 June 1919 by the Boston Navy Yard; launched 2 June 1920; sponsored by Miss Helen Griffin, daughter of Rear Admiral Robert Griffin; and commissioned 25 October 1920, Comdr. H.T. Meriwether, USNRF, in command.

Originally classified as Fuel Ship No 17 through 1920, *Neches* was assigned to Boston, Mass. until 3 March 1922. During service with the Atlantic Fleet, she performed fleet fuel duties along the East Coast, participated in tactical exercises, carried mail, and towed targets. She also made several trips to Port Arthur, Tex. for fuel oil and gasoline.

She fueled at Fall River, Mass. in early March 1922 and then steamed for Norfolk, Va. She next got underway for her new home yard at Mare Island, Calif., and thence to San Diego, her new homeport, whence she operated as a fleet oilier. She underwent overhaul commencing 1 May 1926 at Mare Island, during which a new hydraulic gasoline stowage system was installed. During the ensuing 15 years *Neches* was a busy ship. She participated in and helped develop fleet tactics, fueled the fleet, and supplied oil and gasoline to bases in the Canal Zone, Caribbean, and Hawaii.

The oilier was underway from San Diego to Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked that base. She arrived 10 December 1941, rapidly off-loaded and hurriedly returned to San Diego in order to take on more cargo for Pearl Harbor.

Neches steamed from Pearl Harbor late in the afternoon of 22 January 1942, headed for the western Pacific. Shortly after midnight, the watch discerned a possible submarine at a range of about 1,000 yards and immediately took evasive action. At 0310 there was a heavy thud amidships, probably a dud torpedo.

At 0319 a torpedo struck the oiler on the starboard side abaft the engine room. The explosion caused extensive flooding in the engine room spaces, although water did not reach the fire room. At 0328 the submarine [I-72] was sighted to port just before another torpedo struck the port side. Both 5-inch guns took the submarine under fire and continued firing until 0335, when the list to starboard made it impossible to depress the guns sufficiently.

Neches slowly settled forward and the list to starboard increased steadily. She sank at 0437, with a loss of fifty-seven men. [21°01'N, 160°06'W. The loss of her support forced cancellation of TF 11's projected raid on Wake.]"
-http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/dafs/AO/ao5.html

General Notes

None available in the database.

Wreck Condition/Salvage History

Unknown; the wreck has never been located or surveyed.

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

NOAA archaeologists have located little additional historic documentation on the sinking of USS *Neches* that would allow much additional archaeological assessment about the shipwreck on top of the casualty narrative included in this packet. Additionally, the wreck has never been located, and the depth and distance from shore that the wreck was lost at prevent an accurate archaeological assessment of the shipwreck from being made. Historic sinking reports place the shipwreck between 47 and 100 miles from shore in water depths over 15,500 feet. Based on the large degree of inaccuracy between these reported sinking locations, it is unlikely that the shipwreck will be intentionally located.

Ongoing research also strongly suggests that vessels in great depths of water are generally found in an upright orientation. This orientation has often lead to loss of oil from vents and piping long before loss of structural integrity of hull plates from corrosion or other physical impacts. As it is believed that this vessel is in water greater than 15,500 feet, it is likely to have settled upright and may no longer contain oil.

Should the vessel be located in a survey of opportunity or due to a mystery spill attributed to this vessel, 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 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 Register of Historic Places. 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: http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/AO/AO-5_Neches.html

Construction Diagrams or Plans in RULET Database? No

Text References:

-http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/AO/AO-5_Neches.html

Vessel Risk Factors

In this section, the risk factors that are associated with the vessel are defined and then applied to the USS *Neches* 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 1-1 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

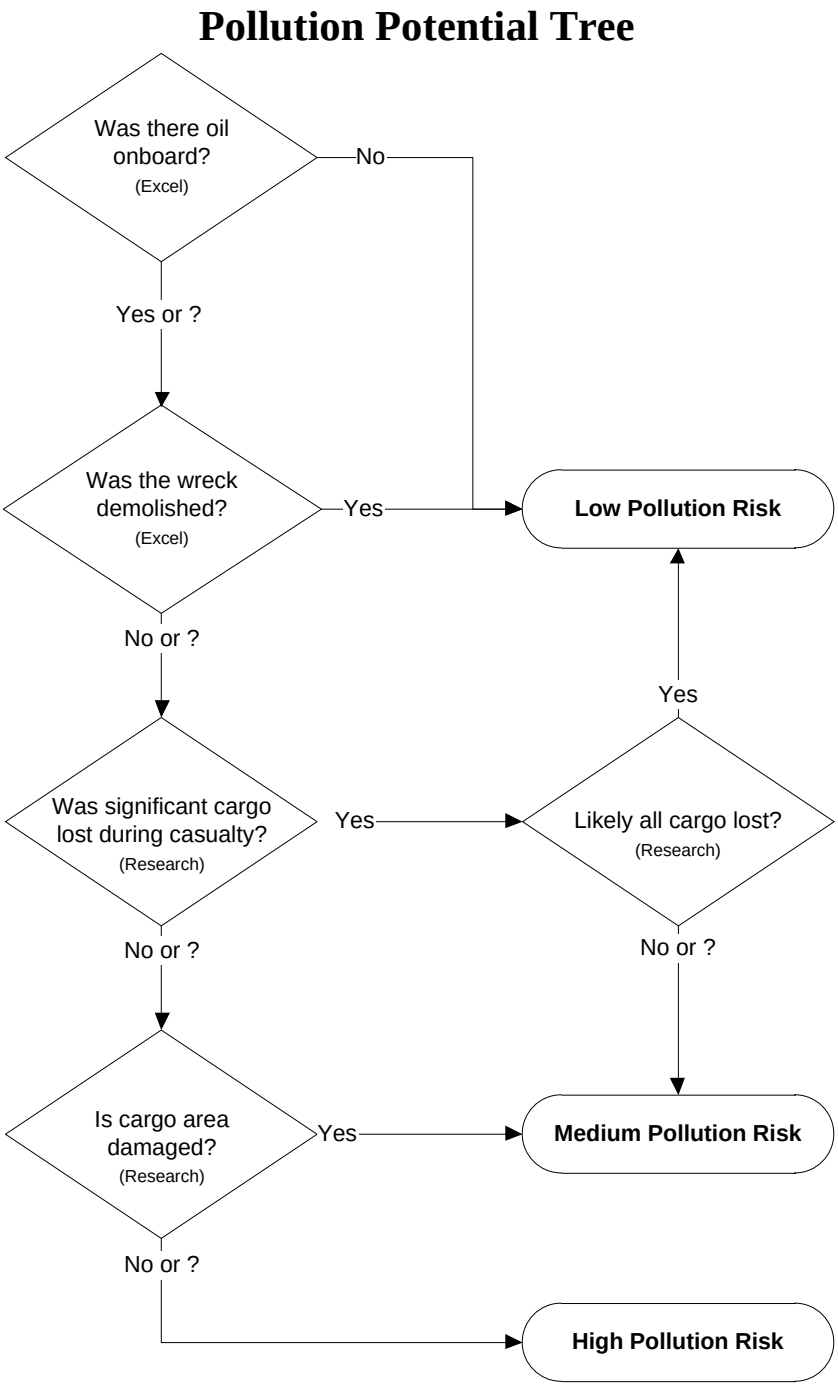


Figure 1-1: U.S. Coast Guard Salvage Engineering Response Team (SERT) developed the above Pollution Potential Decision Tree.

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 1-1.

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 USS *Neches* 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 USS *Neches i*s ranked as High Volume because it is thought to have a potential for up to 67,700 bbl, although some of that may have been lost at the time of the casualty or after the vessel sank. 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 no reports of leakage from the USS *Neches*.

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:

- **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 USS *Neches* is classified as Medium Risk because the cargo is believed to be a light fuel oil, a Group II oil, but the exact type is not known. Data quality is low.

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 USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk because there are no known historic accounts of the wreck being demolished as a hazard to navigation. 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

[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)."
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]

The USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk because there was no known report of fire at the time of casualty, although it is possible the torpedoes lit the cargo on fire. Data quality is low because full sinking reports were not located.

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 USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk because there is no known report of oil on the water at the time of the casualty. Data quality is low because full sinking reports were not located.

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 USS *Neches* is classified as Low Risk because there were multiple torpedo detonations. 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 USS *Neches* is classified as Unknown Risk because it is not known whether additional structural breakup occurred as the location is unknown. Data quality is Low.

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 location of the USS *Neches* is unknown. Data quality is low.

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 depth for USS *Neches* is believed to be over 15,500 feet based on the last reported location. Data quality is low.

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 USS *Neches* is unknown. Data quality is low.

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 USS *Neches* had munitions for onboard weapons, which consisted of two 5-inch guns and two 3-inch 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 USS *Neches*. Operational factors are listed but do not have a risk score.

Table 1-1: Summary matrix for the vessel risk factors for the USS *Neches* 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 67,700 bbl, not reported to be leaking	**Med**
	A2: Oil Type	Low	Oil is believed to be a light fuel oil, a Group II oil type	
	B: Wreck Clearance	High	Vessel not reported as cleared	
	C1: Burning of the Ship	Low	No fire was reported	
	C2: Oil on Water	Low	No known reports of oil on the water	
	D1: Nature of Casualty	High	Multiple torpedo detonations	
	D2: Structural Breakup	Low	Unknown structural breakup	
Archaeological Assessment	Archaeological Assessment	Low	Limited sinking records were located and no site reports exist so an accurate assessment could not be generated	**Not Scored**
Operational Factors	Wreck Orientation	Low	Unknown, potential to be upright	**Not Scored**
	Depth	Low	Unknown, believed greater than 15,500 feet	
	Visual or Remote Sensing Confirmation of Site Condition	Low	Location unknown	
	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 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 USS *Neches* this would be about 68,000 bbl (rounded up from 67,700 bbl) based on current estimates of the amount of oil remaining onboard the wreck.

The likeliest scenario of oil release from most sunken wrecks, including the USS *Neches*, 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, the 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 USS *Neches*.

Scenario Type	Release per Episode	Time Period	Release Rate	Relative Likelihood	Response Tier
Chronic (0.1% of WCD)	68 bbl	Fairly regular intervals or constant	100 bbl over several days	More likely	Tier 1
Episodic (1% of WCD)	680 bbl	Irregular intervals	Over several hours or days	Most Probable	Tier 1-2
Most Probable (10% of WCD)	6,800 bbl	One-time release	Over several hours or days	Most Probable	Tier 2
Large (50% of WCD)	34,000 bbl	One-time release	Over several hours or days	Less likely	Tier 2-3
Worst Case	68,000 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.

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 USS *Neches* contained a maximum of 55,700 bbl of fuel oil as cargo and less than 12,000 bbl of marine diesel as bunker fuel (both Group II oils). Thus, the oil spill model was run using light fuel oil.

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 2-2b 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 USS *Neches* 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 2-1. Using this figure, the water column impacts can be estimated for any spill volume.

[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. Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Washington, DC.

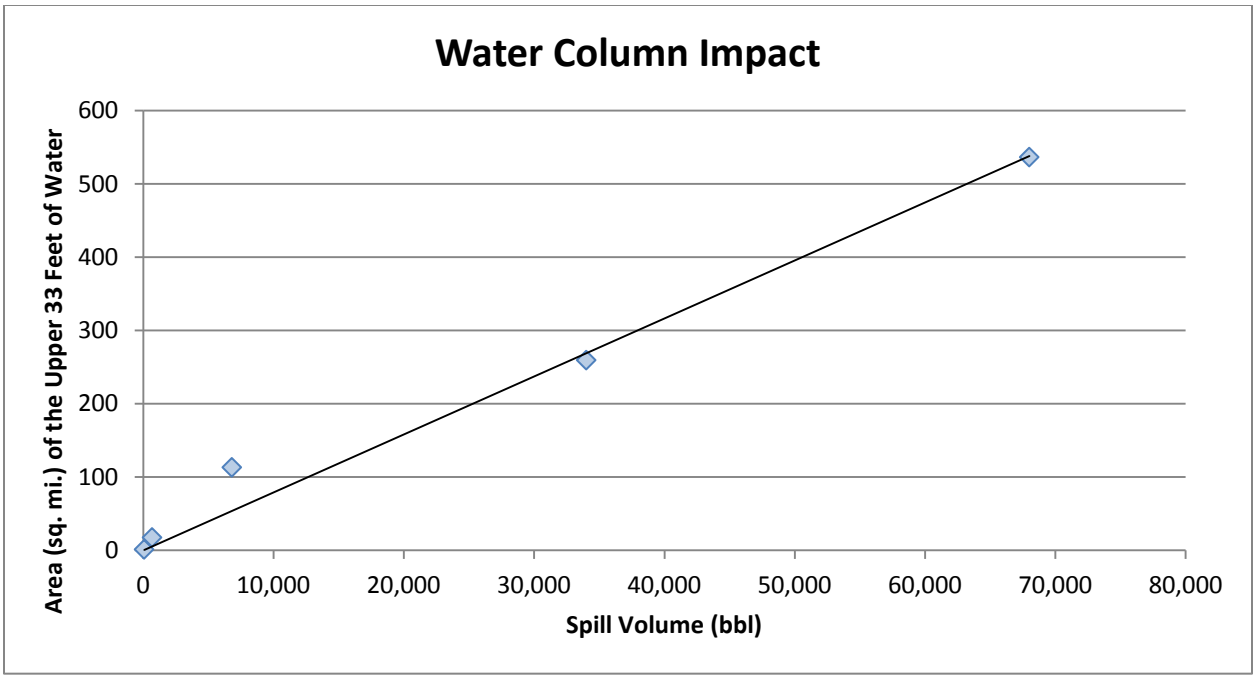


Figure 2-1: Regression curve for estimating the volume of water column at or above 1 ppb aromatics impacted as a function of spill volume for the USS *Neches*.

Potential Water Surface Slick

The slick size from an oil release from the USS *Neches* 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. Note that this is an estimate of total water surface affected over a 30-day period. 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.

Table 2-3: Estimated slick area swept on water for oil release scenarios from the USS *Neches*.

Scenario Type	Oil Volume (bbl)	Estimated Slick Area Swept Mean of All Models	
		0.01 g/m²	10 g/m²
Chronic	68	360 mi²	0 mi²
Episodic	680	1,400 mi²	1 mi²
Most Probable	6,800	5,900 mi²	3 mi²
Large	34,000	19,000 mi²	7 mi²
Worst Case Discharge	68,000	32,000 mi²	11 mi²

The location, size, shape, and spread of the oil slick(s) from an oil release from the USS *Neches* will depend on environmental conditions, including winds and currents, at the time of release and in its aftermath. The areas potentially affected by oil slicks, given that we cannot predict when the spill might occur and the range of possible wind and current conditions that might prevail after a release, are shown in Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3 using the Most Probable volume and the socio-economic and ecological thresholds.

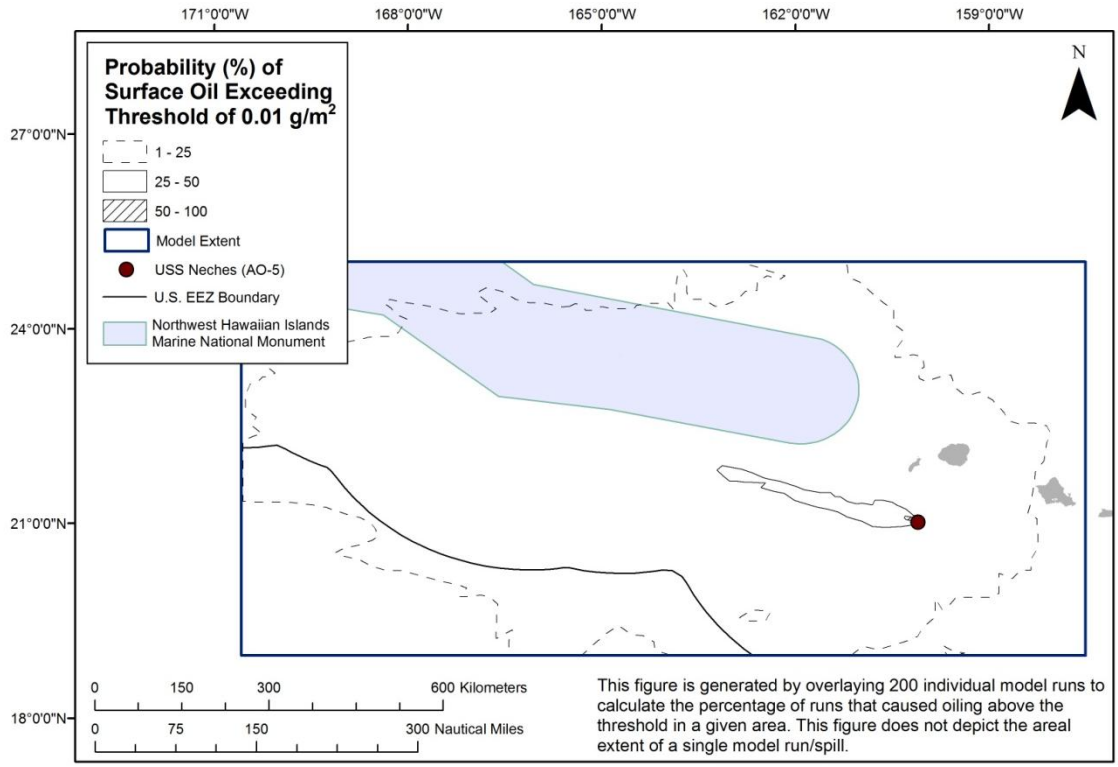


Figure 2-2: Probability of surface oil (exceeding 0.01 g/m^2) from the Most Probable spill of 6,800 bbl of light fuel oil from the USS *Neches* at the threshold for socio-economic resources at risk.

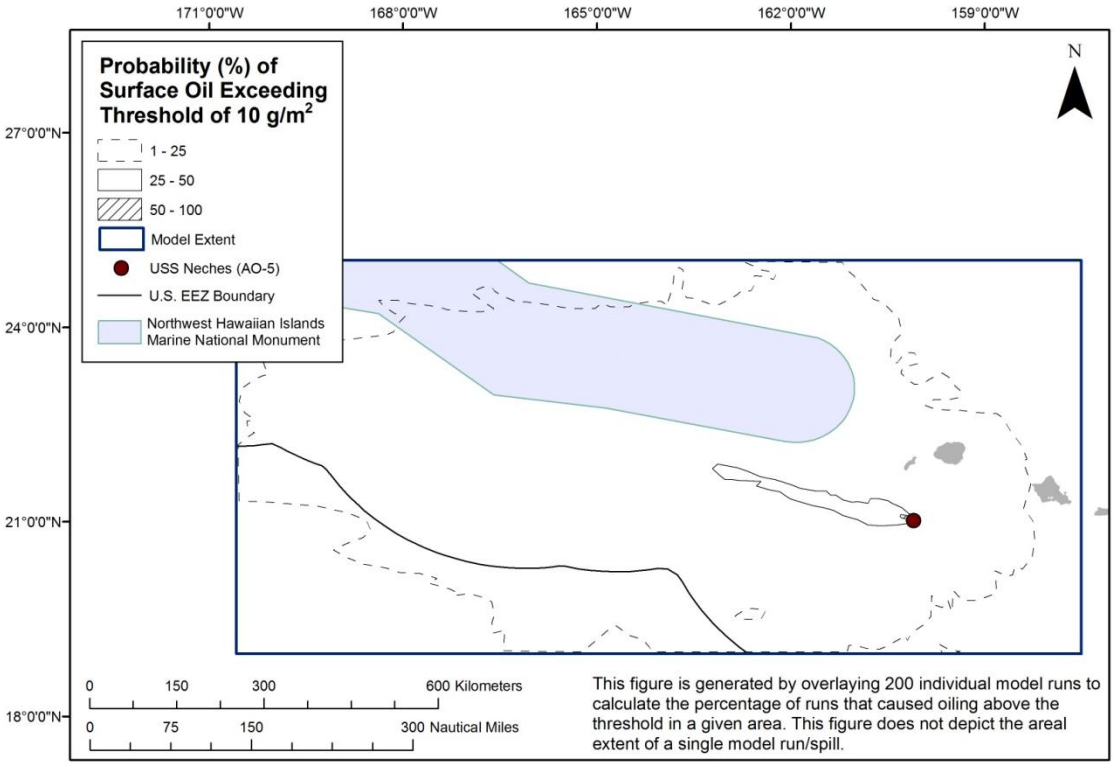


Figure 2-3: Probability of surface oil (exceeding 10 g/m^2) from the Most Probable spill of 6,800 bbl of light fuel oil from the USS *Neches* at the threshold for ecological resources at risk.

The maximum potential cumulative area swept by oil slicks at some time after a Most Probable Discharge is shown in Figure 2-4 as the timing of oil movements.

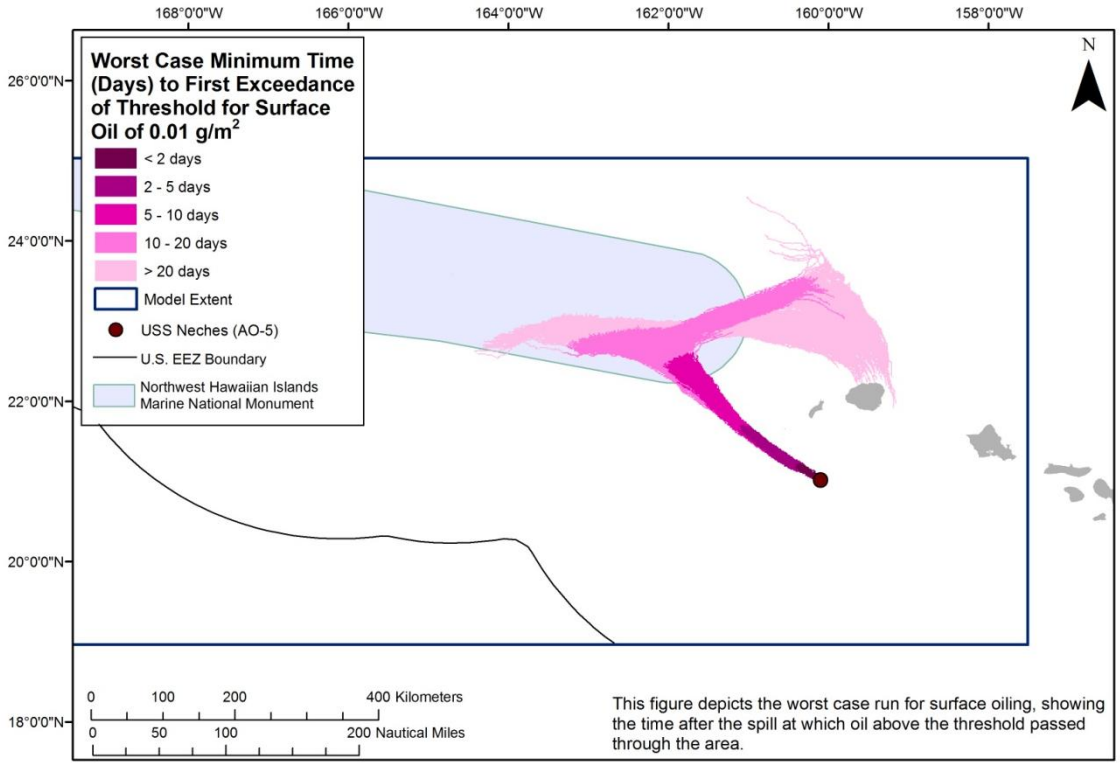


Figure 2-4: Water surface oiling from the Most Probable spill of 6,800 bbl of light fuel oil from the USS *Neches* shown as the area over which the oil spreads at different time intervals.

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, which is shown in Figure 2-5. Using this figure, the area of water surface with a barely visible sheen can be estimated for any spill volume. Note that there are different scales for each threshold (on the right for the 10 g/m^2 curve and on the left for the 0.01 g/m^2 curve.

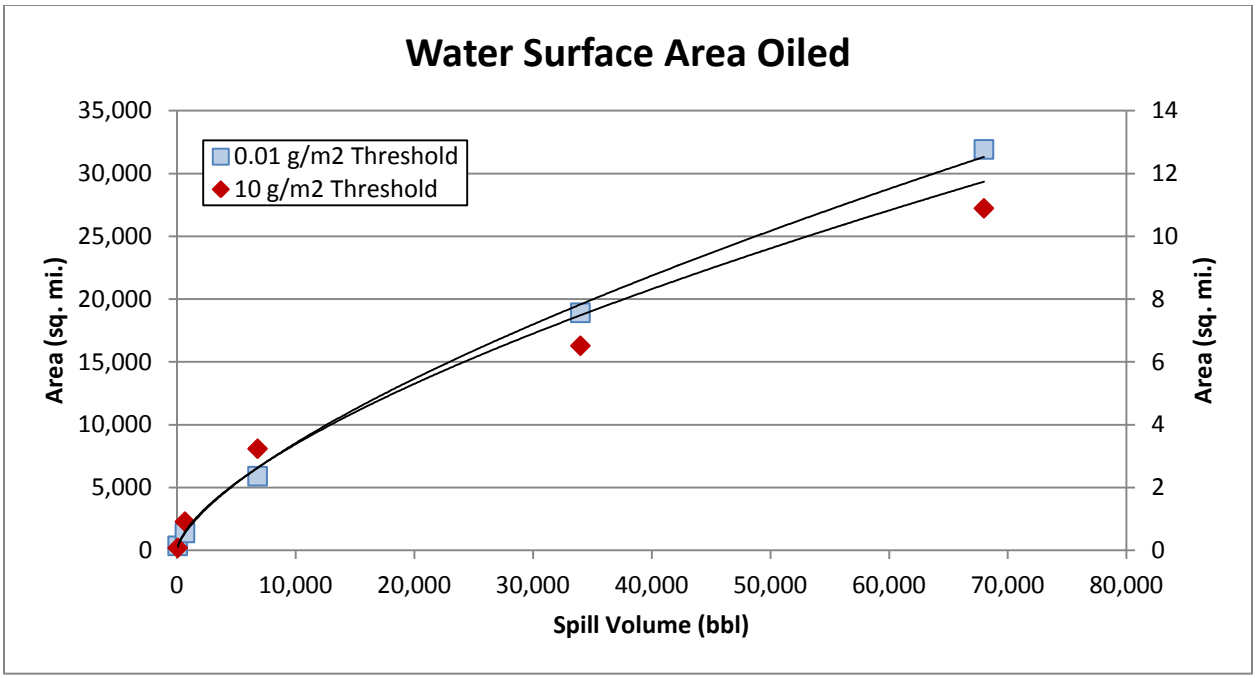


Figure 2-5: Regression curve for estimating the amount of water surface oiling as a function of spill volume for the USS *Neches*, showing both the ecological threshold of 10 g/m^2 (use the scale on the left side of the plot) and socio-economic threshold of 0.01 g/m^2 (use the scale on the left side of the plot).

Potential Shoreline Impacts

Based on these modeling results, shorelines on the islands of Ni'ihau and Kaua'i are at most, risk, with some potential oiling on the western tip of Oahu. Figure 2-6 shows the probability of oil stranding on the shoreline at concentrations that exceed the threshold of 1 g/m^2, for the Most Probable release of 6,800 bbl. 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. Figure 2-7 shows the single oil spill scenario that resulted in the maximum extent of shoreline oiling for the Most Probable volume. Estimated miles of shoreline oiling above the threshold of 1 g/m^2 by scenario type are shown in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4: Estimated shoreline oiling from leakage from the USS *Neches*.

Scenario Type	Volume (bbl)	Estimated Miles of Shoreline Oiling Above 1 g/m^2			
		Rock/Gravel/Artificial	Sand	Wetland/Mudflat	Total
Chronic	68	0	0	0	0
Episodic	680	2	0	0	2
Most Probable	6,800	3	1	0	4
Large	34,000	4	1	0	5
Worst Case Discharge	68,000	5	1	0	6

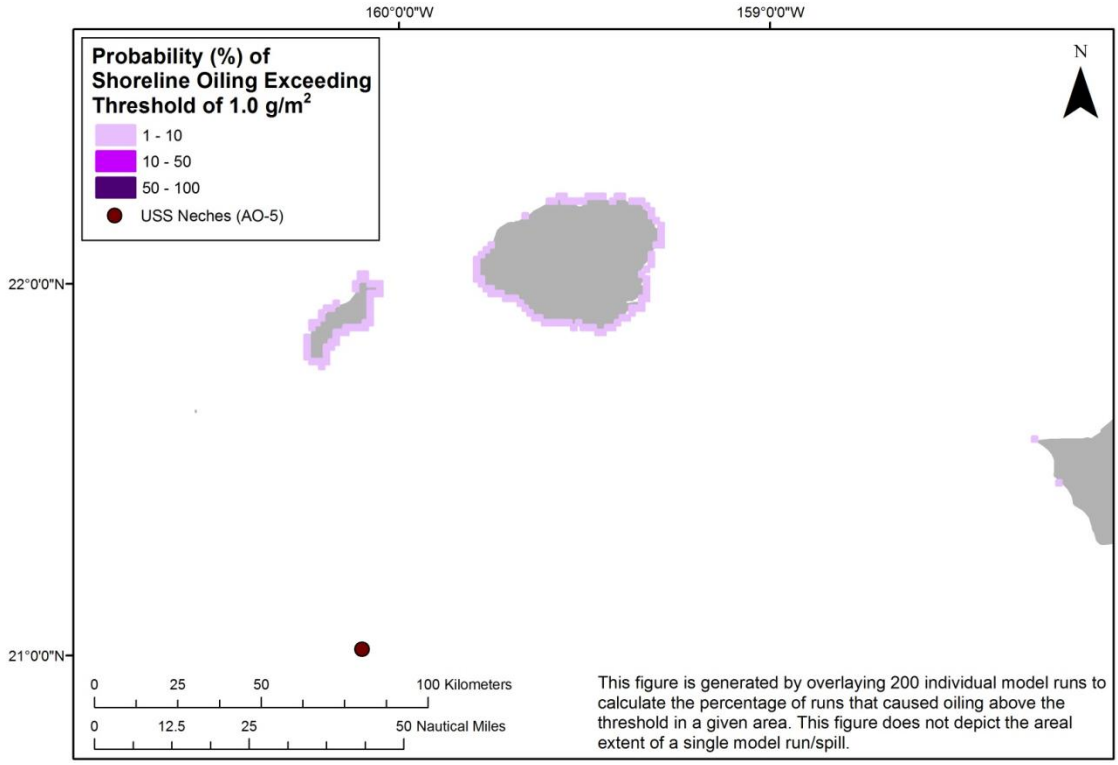


Figure 2-6: Probability of shoreline oiling (exceeding 1.0 g/m^2) from the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl of light fuel oil from the USS *Neches*.

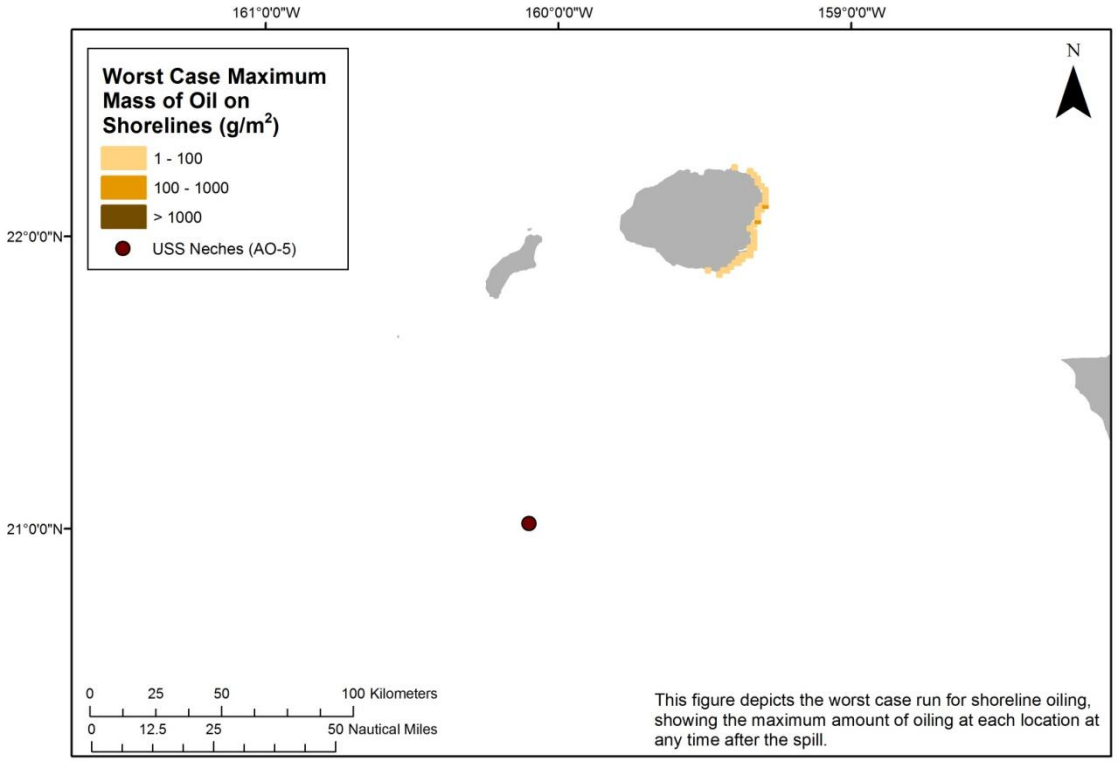


Figure 2-7: The extent and degree of shoreline oiling from the single model run of the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl of light fuel oil from the USS *Neches* that resulted in the greatest shoreline oiling.

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, which is shown in Figure 2-8. Using this figure, the shore length oiled can be estimated for any spill volume.

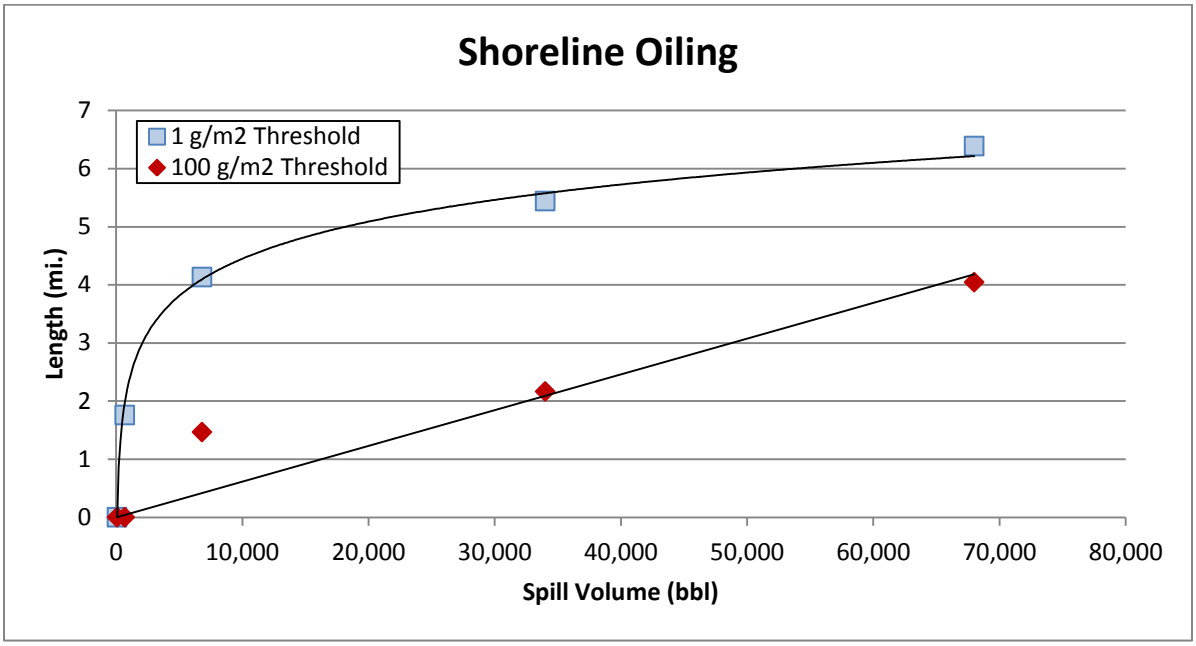


Figure 2-8: Regression curve for estimating the amount of shoreline oiling at different thresholds as a function of spill volume for the USS *Neches*.

The worst case scenario for shoreline exposure along the potentially impacted area for the WCD volume (Table 2-5) and the Most Probable volume (Table 2-6) consists primarily of sand beaches. Salt marshes and tidal flats near tidal inlets are also at risk.

Table 2-5: Worst case scenario shoreline impact by habitat type and oil thickness for a leakage of 68,000 bbl from the USS *Neches*.

Shoreline/Habitat Type	Lighter Oiling Oil Thickness <1 mm Oil Thickness >1 g/m²	Heavier Oiling Oil Thickness >1 mm Oil Thickness >100 g/m²
Rocky and artificial shores/Gravel beaches	21 miles	14 miles
Sand beaches	9 miles	1 miles
Salt marshes and tidal flats	0 miles	0 miles

Table 2-6: Worst case scenario shoreline impact by habitat type and oil thickness for a leakage of 6,800 bbl from the USS *Neches*.

Shoreline/Habitat Type	Lighter Oiling Oil Thickness <1 mm Oil Thickness >1 g/m²	Heavier Oiling Oil Thickness >1 mm Oil Thickness >100 g/m²
Rocky and artificial shores/Gravel beaches	10 miles	0 miles
Sand beaches	4 miles	0 miles
Salt marshes and tidal flats	0 miles	0 miles

SECTION 3: ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES AT RISK

Ecological resources at risk from a catastrophic release of oil from the USS *Neches* (Table 3-1) include numerous seabird species, endangered sea turtles, marine mammals and significant amounts of coral reefs. Impacted areas include parts of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, which includes many unique and endemic species and extremely high abundances of nesting seabirds and green sea turtles.

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

Species Group	Species Subgroup and Geography	Seasonal Presence
Birds	Sites in the Main Hawaiian Islands (all numbers are in nesting pairs) *Kaua'i* • Newell's shearwater (FE, SE), wedge-tailed shearwater (~300), Laysan albatross (24), Hawaiian stilt (FE, SE), black-crowned night-heron, Hawaiian common moorhen (FE, SE), Hawaiian coot (FE, SE), Hawaiian duck (FE, SE), Hawaiian goose (FE, SE) are nesting in coastal regions in area of impact • Overwintering waterfowl include green-winged teal, lesser scaup, northern pintail, northern shoveler *Ni'hau* • Nesting birds include: red-footed booby (1,500), wedge-tailed shearwater (1,000), red-tailed tropicbird (220), black noddy (23), Hawaiian stilt, Hawaiian coot and Hawaiian duck • Shorebirds present in coastal areas include long-billed dowitcher, Pacific golden plover, ruddy turnstone, sanderling wandering tattler • Waterfowl present include green-winged teal, lesser scaup, northern pintail, northern shoveler *Ka'ula* • Nesting: black noddy (30), black-footed albatross (100), brown booby (133), brown noddy (6,041), Bulwer's petrel (50), Christmas shearwater (10), gray-backed tern (1,150), great frigatebird (168), Laysan albatross (200), masked booby (300), red-footed booby (114), red-tailed tropicbird (143), sooty tern (14,425), wedge-tailed shearwater (775), white tern (5) Sites in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) *French Frigate Shoals* • 6 nesting sites: sooty tern (69,000), brown noddy (5-6,000), black-footed albatross (3-4,000), black noddy (3,424), Laysan albatross (2,600), gray-backed tern (~1,000), wedge-tailed shearwater (875 pairs), red-tailed tropicbird (700), great frigatebird (550-600), white tern (555),Bulwer's petrel (~600), red-footed booby (575), masked booby (450), brown booby (50), Christmas shearwater (25), Tristram's storm petrel (14), blue-gray noddy (1), Bonin petrel, shorebirds *Necker* • One nesting site: brown noddy (12,500), gray-backed tern (4,000), wedge-tailed shearwater (2,000), blue-gray noddy (1,250), sooty tern (510), Laysan albatross (500), black noddy (400), Bulwer's petrel (370), white tern (200), great frigatebird (227), black-footed albatross (112), brown booby (90), red-	Migratory waterfowl present: Sep-Mar Hawaiian resident waterfowl: year round, breed Mar-Sep Shorebirds more common in Aug-Apr Hawaiian stilt nests Mar-Jun *Nesting seabird presence*: Black-footed albatross: Oct-Jul Bonin petrel: Aug-Jun Bulwer's petrel: Mar-Oct Christmas shearwater: Feb-Nov Laysan albatross: Nov-Aug Newell's shearwater: May-Oct Red-tailed tropicbird: Feb-Nov Sooty tern: Feb-Oct Wedge-tailed shearwater: Mar-Dec

Species Group	Species Subgroup and Geography	Seasonal Presence
	footed booby (8), red-tailed tropicbird (125), Tristram's storm-petrel (1), masked booby (3), Christmas shearwater, *Nihoa* • Nihoa millerbird (FE) and Nihoa finch (FE, SE) are both endemic to Nihoa • Nihoa has one of the largest populations of breeding birds in the NWHI: Bulwer's petrel (130,000), wedge-tailed shearwater (35,000), brown noddy (30,000), sooty tern (22,500), gray-backed tern (10,500), white tern (3,000), black noddy (3,000), Tristram's storm-petrel (2,500), blue-gray noddy (2,250), great frigatebird (1,324), red-footed booby (744), red-tailed tropicbird (275), Christmas shearwater (225), masked booby (104), brown booby (45), black-footed albatross (31), Laysan albatross	
Sea Turtles	Green sea turtles (FT) bask on beaches in the region and nest in high concentrations throughout the area of impact • French frigate shoals is the primary rookery for the Hawaiian green sea turtle (90% of all nesting within the Hawaiian Archipelago, 50% of the FFS nesting on East Island Loggerhead (FE), hawksbill (FE), olive ridley (FT), and leatherback (FE) sea turtles are all present in waters in the area of impact • Loggerheads present in high densities on north side of Ni'hau	Green sea turtles nest Apr-Aug, hatch Jul-Oct
Marine Mammals	Hawaiian monk seals (FE,SE) are critically endangered and can be found in the region: • NWHI waters < 20 fathoms are all critical habitat • French frigate shoals has the largest monk seal colony of the Hawaiian islands (2006 estimate is > 246 seals) • Other colonies are found on Necker (~37), Nihoa (~ 74), and in the main Hawaiian Islands (Ni'hau, Kaua'i, Oahu: 113 total) • Seal colonies are located along the south shore of Kaua'i *Cetaceans* • 24 species of cetaceans have been documented in the HI EEZ • Approximately 2/3 of N. Pacific humpback whale (FE,SE) population migrates to Hawaii each winter for breeding and calving; waters north of Kaua'i are part of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale NMS • Spinner dolphins use nearshore waters as resting areas and are commonly found in the area of impact • Bottlenose dolphin common in nearshore waters • Sperm whales (FE,SE) commonly observed offshore • The insular Hawaiian population of false killer whales is a candidate for listing as endangered under the ESA • False killer whales, bottlenose dolphin, spinner dolphin, pantropical spotted dolphin, pygmy killer whale, melon-headed whale, short-finned pilot whale, rough-toothed dolphin, Blainville's beaked whales and Cuvier's beaked whale all are known or thought to have a Hawaiian insular population separate from animals found in the open ocean • Other species occur but are less common: fin whale (FE), sei whale (FE), pantropical spotted dolphin, striped dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, Risso's dolphin, Fraser's dolphin, melon-headed whale, short-finned pilot whale, killer whale, *Kogia* spp., beaked whales (3 species), Bryde's whale, rough-toothed dolphins	Monk seals pup Mar-Jun Humpback whales present, calving and mating: Dec-Apr Baleen whales winter or migrate through area
Fish and Invertebrates	*Nearshore* • Very high concentrations of large jacks, gray reef sharks,	Fish present year round

Species Group	Species Subgroup and Geography	Seasonal Presence
	• High concentrations of hardbottom associated species: angelfish, butterflyfish, cornetfish, damselfish, gobies, groupers, reef, sharks, moray eels, conger eels, parrotfish, puffers, scorpionfish, surgeonfish, triggerfish, wrasses, snappers, octopus, echinoderms, banded spiny lobster, tufted spiny lobster • Other nearshore species include manta rays, halfbeak • Native stream gobies can be present in the mouths of coastal streams • Tide pools communities present along some rocky shorelines • Endemic marine species (dragonet, scorpionfish, cardinalfish, snails) present in the region *Offshore* • High concentrations of dolphin, Galapagos shark, gray reef shark, marlin, moonfish, swordfish, tunas, wahoo, whitetip reef shark	Lobster spawn May-Aug
Habitats	Significant areas of living coral reef, including areas of high biodiversity and rare corals can be found in the shallow, nearshore areas • French frigate shoals: >232,000 acres of reef habitat; 66 species of stony coral, 27 endemic (26 % coral cover), largest atoll in the NWHI • Necker (Mokumanamana): 21 species. stony coral, 8 endemic (1.7% coral cover) • Nihoa: 140,544 acres of reef habitat, 17 species of stony coral, 4 endemic • Areas of high live coral cover are scattered around the perimeter of Ka'ula Kaua'i and Ni'hau; several reefs are considered coral areas of special significance Significant patches of seagrass and submerged algal mats are also present in shallow waters throughout the area of impact	Coral spawning: Jun-August

The Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) atlases for the potentially impacted coastal areas from a leak from the USS *Neches* 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 based on 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 median case for which there is at least some impact. The median 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 USS *Neches* is provided, both as text and as shading of the applicable degree of risk bullet, for the WCD release of 68,000 bbl and a border around the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl.

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

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 USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk for oiling probability for water column ecological resources for the WCD of 68,000 bbl because 98% of the model runs resulted in contamination of more than 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column above the threshold of 1 ppb aromatics. It is classified as High Risk for degree of oiling because the mean volume of water contaminated was 540 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column. For the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl, the USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk for oiling probability for water column ecological resources because 100% of the model runs resulted in contamination of more than 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column above the threshold of 1 ppb aromatics. It is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling because the mean volume of water contaminated was 110 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

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 USS *Neches* is classified as Low Risk for oiling probability for water surface ecological resources for the WCD because 0% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of the water surface affected above the threshold of 10 g/m^2. It is Low Risk for degree of oiling because the mean area of water contaminated was 11 mi^2. The USS *Neches* is classified as Low Risk for oiling probability for water surface ecological resources for the Most Probable Discharge because 0% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of

the water surface affected above the threshold of 10 g/m^2. It is classified as Low Risk for degree of oiling because the mean area of water contaminated was 3 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. In this risk analysis, shorelines have been 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.

Risk Factor 3C-1: Shoreline Probability of Oiling of EcoRAR

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 USS *Neches* is classified as Low Risk for oiling probability for shoreline ecological resources for the WCD because 8% of the model runs resulted in shorelines affected above the threshold of 100 g/m^2. It is classified as Low Risk for degree of oiling because the mean weighted length of shoreline contaminated was 8 miles. The USS *Neches* is classified as Low Risk for oiling probability to shoreline ecological resources for the Most Probable Discharge because 2% of the model runs resulted in shorelines affected above the threshold of 100 g/m^2. It is classified as Low Risk for degree of oiling because the mean weighted length of shoreline contaminated was 3 miles.

Considering the modeled risk scores and the ecological resources at risk, the ecological risk from potential releases of the WCD of 68,000 bbl of light oil from the USS *Neches* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 3-2:

- Water column resources – Medium, because the area of highest exposure occurs in deep waters without any known concentrations of sensitive upper water column resources
- Water surface resources – Low, because a very small area is likely to be contaminated above the ecological threshold. 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 and streamers
- Shoreline resources – Low, because most of the shoreline at risk is composed of rocky shores where light fuel oils are not expected to persist, although sand beaches are also at risk

Table 3-2: Ecological risk factor scores for the **Worst Case Discharge of 68,000 bbl** of light oil from the USS *Neches*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
3A-1: Water Column Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	98% of the model runs resulted in at least 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column contaminated above 1 ppb aromatics	Med
3A-2: Water Column Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 540 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
3B-1: Water Surface Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	0% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of water surface covered by at least 10 g/m^2	Low
3B-2: Water Surface Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean area of water contaminated above 10 g/m^2 was 11 mi^2	
3C-1: Shoreline Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	8% of the model runs resulted in shoreline oiling of 100 g/m^2	Low
3C-2: Shoreline Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 100 g/m^2 was 8 mi	

For the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl, the ecological risk from potential releases from the USS *Neches* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 3-3:

- Water column resources – Medium, because the area of highest exposure occurs in deep waters without any known concentrations of sensitive upper water column resources
- Water surface resources – Low, because a very small area is likely to be contaminated above the ecological threshold. 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 and streamers
- Shoreline resources – Low, because of the small amount of potential shoreline oiling, mostly along rocky shores where light oil is not likely to persist

Table 3-3: Ecological risk factor scores for the **Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl** of light oil from the USS *Neches*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
3A-1: Water Column Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	100% of the model runs resulted in at least 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column contaminated above 1 ppb aromatics	Med
3A-2: Water Column Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 110 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
3B-1: Water Surface Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	0% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of water surface covered by at least 10 g/m^2	Low
3B-2: Water Surface Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean area of water contaminated above 10 g/m^2 was 3 mi^2	
3C-1: Shoreline Probability EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	2% of the model runs resulted in shoreline oiling of 100 g/m^2	Low
3C-2: Shoreline Degree EcoRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 100 g/m^2 was 3 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 USS *Neches* include Hawaiian native homelands on the island of Kaua'i, as well as a number of beach communities on that island and the islands of Ni'ihau and Oahu. There are two national wildlife refuges and several state parks on the island of Kaua'i.

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 USS *Neches* 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 USS *Neches*.

Resource Type	Resource Name	Economic Activities
Tourist Beaches	Pu'uwai Kilauea Hanalei Waimea Kalaheo Koloa Lihue Hanamaulu Anahola Wai'anae	Potentially affected beach resorts and beach-front communities on the Hawaiian islands of Ni'ihau, Kaua'i, and Oahu provide recreational activities (e.g., swimming, boating, recreational fishing, wildlife viewing, nature study, sports, dining, camping, and amusement parks) with substantial income for local communities and state tax income. Much of these islands are lined with economically valuable beach resorts and residential communities.
National Marine Monument	Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument	The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) were made the Papahānaumokuākea Hawaii Islands Marine National Monument (PMNM, providing permanent protection for the nearly 140,000 square miles of U.S. land and waters, thereby creating the world's largest marine conservation area. The area includes the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge/Battle of Midway National Memorial, the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and the State of Hawaii's NWHI Refuge.
National Wildlife Refuges	Hanalei NWR Huleia NWR	National wildlife refuges on the island of Kaua'i may be impacted. These federally-managed and protected lands provide refuges and conservation areas for sensitive species and habitats.
State Parks	Ha'ena State Park Na Pali Coast State Park	Coastal state parks are significant recreational resources for the public (e.g., swimming, boating, recreational fishing,

Resource Type	Resource Name	Economic Activities
	Koke'e State Park Waimea Canyon State Park Russian Fort Elizabeth State Historic Park Wailua River State Park	wildlife viewing, nature study, sports, dining, camping, and amusement parks). They provide income to the state.
Tribal Lands	Hanapepe Kapa'a Kekaha Wailua	There are a number of Hawaiian native homelands on the island of Kaua'I that may be impacted.

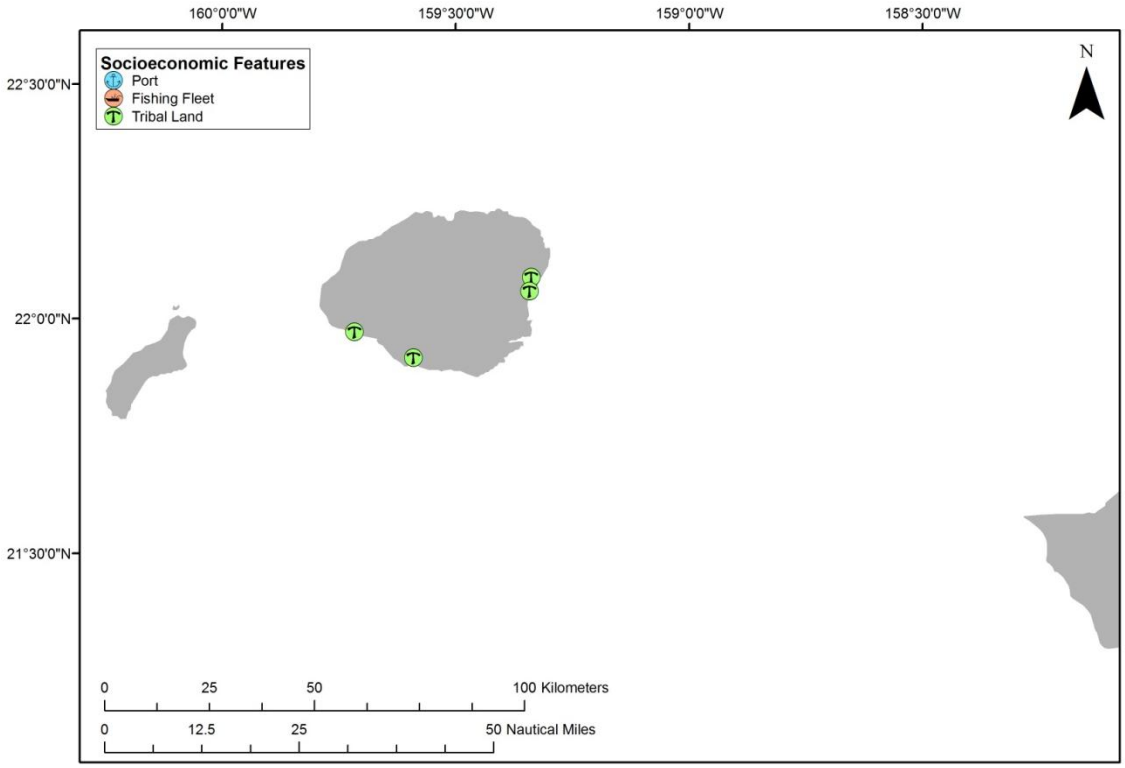


Figure 4-1: Tribal lands, ports, and commercial fishing fleets at risk from a release from the USS Neches. (Note that there are no fishing fleets or ports at risk.)

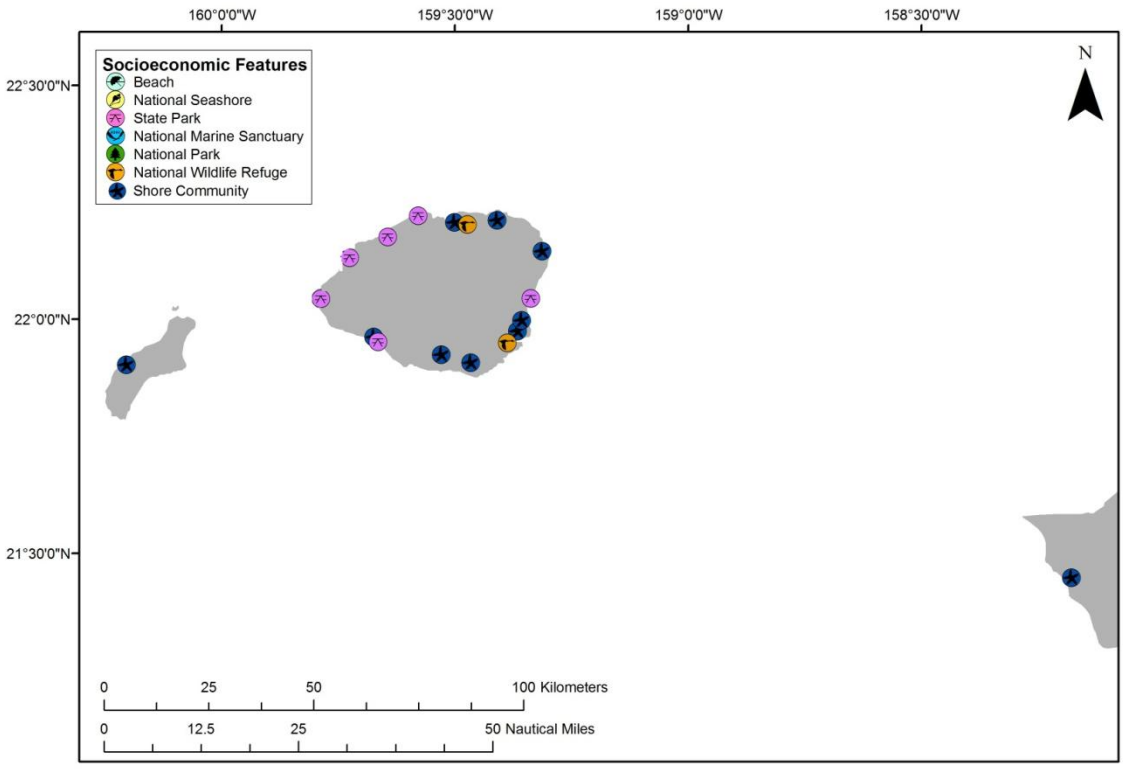


Figure 4-2: Beaches, coastal state parks, and Federal protected areas at risk from a release from the USS *Neches*.

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 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 is to be any impact. The measure of the degree of impact is based on the median case for which there is at least some impact. The median case is the "middle case" – half of the cases for which there are 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 USS *Neches*, shading indicates the degree of risk for a WCD release of 68,000 bbl and a border indicates degree of risk for the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl.

Risk Factor 4A-1: Water Column: Probability of Oiling of SRAR

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 USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk for both oiling probability and degree of oiling for water column socio-economic resources for the WCD of 68,000 bbl because 98% of the model runs resulted in contamination of more than 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column above the threshold of 1 ppb aromatics, and the mean volume of water contaminated was 540 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column. For the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl, the USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk for oiling probability for water column socio-economic resources because 100% of the model runs resulted in contamination of more than 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column above the threshold of 1 ppb

aromatics. It was classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling because the mean volume of water contaminated was 110 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column.

Risk Factor 4B-1: Water Surface Probability of Oiling of SRAR

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 USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk for both oiling probability and degree of oiling for water surface socio-economic resources for the WCD because 100% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of the water surface affected above the threshold of 0.01 g/m^2, and the mean area of water contaminated was 32,000 mi^2. The USS *Neches* is classified as High Risk for oiling probability for water surface socio-economic resources for the Most Probable Discharge because 99% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of the water surface affected above the threshold of 0.01 g/m^2. It is classified as Medium Risk for degree of oiling because the mean area of water contaminated was 5,900 mi^2.

Risk Factor 4C: Shoreline Impacts to SRAR

The impacts to different types of shorelines vary based on economic value. In this risk analysis, 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"). Note that these values differ from the ecological values of these three shoreline types.

Risk Factor 4C-1: Shoreline Probability of Oiling of SRAR

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 USS *Neches* is classified as Low Risk for oiling probability and Medium Risk for degree of oiling for shoreline socio-economic resources for the WCD because 10% of the model runs resulted in shorelines affected above the threshold of 1 g/m^2, and the mean length of weighted shoreline contaminated was 14 miles. The USS *Neches* is classified as Low Risk for both oiling probability and degree of oiling for shoreline socio-economic resources for the Most Probable Discharge as 5% of the model runs resulted in shorelines affected above the threshold of 1 g/m^2, and the mean length of weighted shoreline contaminated was 9 miles.

Considering the modeled risk scores and the socio-economic resources at risk, the socio-economic risk from potential releases of the WCD of 68,000 bbl of light fuel from the USS *Neches* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 4-2:

- Water column resources – Medium, because there would be impacts to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, although there is a large impact on the water column there are no major commercial fishing grounds in the area affected
- Water surface resources – High, because a relatively large area of offshore waters would be impacted in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, as well as shipping lanes and recreational fishing and diving areas. 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 and streamers
- Shoreline resources – High, because there would be impact to sensitive tribal lands, beach communities, and parks covering most of the islands of Ni'ihau and Kaua'i

Table 4-2: Socio-economic risk factor ranks for the **Worst Case Discharge of 68,000 bbl** of light fuel oil from the USS *Neches*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
4A-1: Water Column Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	98% of the model runs resulted in at least 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column contaminated above 1 ppb aromatics	Med
4A-2: Water Column Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 540 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
4B-1: Water Surface Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	100% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of water surface covered by at least 0.01 g/m^2	High
4B-2: Water Surface Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The mean area of water contaminated above 0.01 g/m^2 was 32,000 mi^2	
4C-1: Shoreline Probability SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	10% of the model runs resulted in shoreline oiling of 1 g/m^2	High
4C-2: Shoreline Degree SRAR Oiling	Low	Medium	High	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 1 g/m^2 was 14 mi	

For the Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl, the socio-economic risk from potential releases of light fuel from the USS *Neches* is summarized as listed below and indicated in the far-right column in Table 4-3:

- Water column resources – Low, because although there is a moderate impact on the water column to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, although there are no major commercial fishing grounds in the area affected
- Water surface resources – Medium, because a moderate area of offshore waters would be impacted in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, as well as shipping lanes and recreational fishing and diving areas. 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 and streamers
- Shoreline resources – High, because there would be impact to sensitive tribal lands, beach communities, and parks covering most of the islands of Ni'ihau and Kaua'i

Table 4-3: Socio-economic risk factor ranks for the **Most Probable Discharge of 6,800 bbl** of light fuel oil from the USS *Neches*.

Risk Factor	Risk Score			Explanation of Risk Score	Final Score
4A-1: Water Column Probability SRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	100% of the model runs resulted in at least 0.2 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column contaminated above 1 ppb aromatics	**Low**
4A-2: Water Column Degree SRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	The mean volume of water contaminated above 1 ppb was 110 mi^2 of the upper 33 feet of the water column	
4B-1: Water Surface Probability SRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	99% of the model runs resulted in at least 1,000 mi^2 of water surface covered by at least 0.01 g/m^2	**Med**
4B-2: Water Surface Degree SRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	The mean area of water contaminated above 0.01 g/m^2 was 5,900 mi^2	
4C-1: Shoreline Probability SRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	5% of the model runs resulted in shoreline oiling of 1 g/m^2	**High**
4C-2: Shoreline Degree SRAR Oiling	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	The length of shoreline contaminated by at least 1 g/m^2 was 9 mi	

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

The overall risk assessment for the USS *Neches* 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 the site formation processes have worked on this particular 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. The ecological and socio-economic risk factors are presented as a single score for water column, water surface, and shoreline resources as the scores were consolidated for each element. For the ecological and socio-economic risk factors each has two components, probability and degree. Of those two, degree is given more weight in deciding the combined score for an individual factor, e.g. a high probability and medium degree score would result in a medium overall for that factor.

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, USS *Neches* scores Medium with 14 points; for the Most Probable Discharge, USS *Neches* also scores Medium with 12 points. Under the National Contingency Plan, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Regional Response Team 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 USS *Neches*. The final determination of what type of action, if any, rests with the U.S. Coast Guard.

USS *Neches*	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

Table 5-1: Summary of risk factors for the USS *Neches*.

Vessel Risk Factors		Data Quality Score	Comments		Risk Score
Pollution Potential Factors	A1: Oil Volume (total bbl)	Medium	Maximum of 67,700 bbl, not reported to be leaking		Med
	A2: Oil Type	Low	Oil is believed to be a light fuel oil, a Group II oil type		
	B: Wreck Clearance	High	Vessel not reported as cleared		
	C1: Burning of the Ship	Low	No fire was reported		
	C2: Oil on Water	Low	No known reports of oil on the water		
	D1: Nature of Casualty	High	Multiple torpedo detonations		
	D2: Structural Breakup	Low	Unknown structural breakup		
Archaeological Assessment	Archaeological Assessment	Low	Limited sinking records were located and no site reports exist so an accurate assessment could not be generated		**Not Scored**
Operational Factors	Wreck Orientation	Low	Unknown, potential to be upright		**Not Scored**
	Depth	Low	Unknown, believed greater than 15,500 feet		
	Visual or Remote Sensing Confirmation of Site Condition	Low	Location unknown		
	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 SMCA		
				WCD	**Most Probable**
Ecological Resources	3A: Water Column Resources	High	The area of highest exposure occurs in deep waters	**Med**	**Med**
	3B: Water Surface Resources	High	Relatively small area of impact from light fuel which tends to quickly disperse	**Low**	**Low**
	3C: Shore Resources	High	Mostly exposed rocky shores at risk, where a light fuel oil is not likely to persist	**Low**	**Low**
Socio-Economic Resources	4A: Water Column Resources	High	Waters of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument are at risk, but there are no major commercial fishing grounds in the likely impact area	**Med**	**Low**
	4B: Water Surface Resources	High	Waters of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument are at risk, as well as in shipping lanes and recreational fishing and diving areas	**High**	**Med**
	4C: Shore Resources	High	Impact to sensitive tribal lands, beach communities, and parks covering most of the islands of Ni'ihau and Kaua'i	**High**	**High**
Summary Risk Scores				**14**	**12**