



# TEXAS CITY "Y" RESPONSE

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## Texas City "Y" Response Area Command



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Update 12: Response efforts continue on South Matagorda Island, Mustang Island and Padre Island National Seashore

PORT O'CONNOR, Texas — On Thursday evening members of the Unified Command met with residents of Calhoun County to update the community on progress of the spill response and to address any issues of concern.

Incident Commander Randal S. Ogryzdiak, Jimmy Martinez of the Texas General Land Office, and Jim Guidry, Vice-President of Kirby Inland Marine, Dr. Jonathan Huss of the Texas Department of Health Services, and Bob Haueter, representing U.S. Representative Blake Farenthold, gave opening remarks which were followed by a question and answer session. Topics addressed include environmental impacts, the status oyster harvesting in area bays, wildlife impacts, employment opportunities and the possible duration of clean-up activities.

The meeting was arranged by the Port O'Connor Chamber of Commerce and Calhoun County Commissioners.

Approximately 200 local residents attended the 90 minute meeting. "Last night's meeting was a good opportunity to hear the concerns of the community and to address those concerns face to face," said Kirby's Jim Guidry. "We realize this incident has been a disruption and that people have genuine concerns about how it has, or may impact them. We needed this time to hear their voices and to give them the facts about what we're doing to protect the environment and their way of life."

Unified Command officials have pledged to accelerate and improve communication with local residents, including providing additional outreach in Spanish. The Texas Department of Health Services is re-releasing its English language fact sheet on algae-related bay closings and distributing it to area residents in Spanish.

Also on Thursday, response crews consisting of 465 clean-up contractors continued their work along impacted sections of Mustang and South Matagorda Islands and Padre Island National Seashore. A total of 188,850 pounds of oiled materials has now be collected from impacted shoreline, including 93,550 pounds from Matagorda Island, 90,775 pounds from Mustang Island and 4525 pounds from the Bob Hall pier area.

This morning, response teams began to stage light mechanical equipment onto South Matagorda to help expedite clean-up operations ahead of the expected migration of Kemp's Ridley sea turtles which use the island for nesting grounds from April through July. All response activities on these islands are being conducted with the highest sensitivity to the fragile environment while maximizing efforts to remove oiled sand and oiled debris.

Matagorda Island and the southeast Texas coastline are especially important to migrating birds. This time of year is peak migration with a diversity of birds feeding on the shorelines and roosting in the dunes. Unified Command has made the restoration of these beaches for the benefit of wildlife a top priority and are working closely with federal and state wildlife agencies.

Wildlife officials updated information on deceased birds and other wildlife on Friday morning. In the Matagorda, Mustang and North Padre areas 77 deceased birds have been recovered. Two birds were being stabilized at the rehabilitation facility in Port O'Connor, for ultimate transport to a similar facility in Baytown for additional treatment. Locally, officials also report that 9 deceased dolphins and 8 sea turtles have also been recovered.

It is unclear whether these deaths are directly related to the oil. Tests to make that determination will take several weeks. Throughout the day wildlife experts from Texas Parks and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife were also engaged in monitoring Whooping Crane and other endangered species habitats. There are no reports of impacts on these species.

Persons who observe any impacted wildlife should not attempt to capture or handle them but are urged to call 888-384-2000.

Residents, tourists and others who may observe tar balls are urged to refrain from attempting their own clean-up activities and are asked to call the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802 to report the exact locations of any sightings. Persons who may be physically impacted by the oil should take quick action to wash the affected area with soap and warm water. The public is discouraged from accessing Matagorda Island until the Unified Command announces that response operations are complete.

County and city officials, their Emergency Management Coordinators, and port officials and state agencies will continue to exchange information through daily stakeholder telephone briefings.

The Kirby Inland Marine claims line is available to persons who may have questions regarding personal impacts from the incident. The number is 855-276-1275. **Please note that a previously published number is no longer operational.**

For more information, contact the Matagorda Bay joint information center at 214-225-8007, or visit [www.texascityYresponse.com](http://www.texascityYresponse.com).

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*For more information contact:*

*Matagorda Response JIC  
Texas City "Y" Response Area Command  
(214) 225-8007  
3674 W. Adams St.  
Port O'Connor, TX 77982  
[TexasCityYResponse@gmail.com](mailto:TexasCityYResponse@gmail.com)*