

Date: November 17, 1997

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Point Reyes National Seashore, Globbs of Oil Found

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TIME: 2:00 p.m.

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Olema, California ---- Superintendent Don Neubacher reported that, since Sunday, November 16, thick oil globules called tar balls have begun showing up on the beaches of Point Reyes National Seashore. These tar balls are typically fist size or smaller, comprised to fresh, heavy, black oil. The oil was first spotted by visitors and National Park Service Staff along Drakes Beach on Sunday morning. The U.S. Coast Guard immediately responded, investigated the situation, and collected oil samples.

Approximately 23 live, oiled birds have been picked up at Point Reyes; 25 dead, oiled birds have been seen, and approximately 40 more live, oiled birds were observed. Many sensitive and threatened species are at risk, including snowy plovers, brown and white pelicans, northern fur seals, elephant seals, and harbor seals. Surveys of beaches began Sunday and will continue to occur with crews under the guidance of Point Reyes National Seashore, California Department of Fish and Game's Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR), and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, a part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

If you see an oiled bird, do not attempt to remove it. Please call 800-228-4544 or notify a ranger of its location and the time you saw the bird. The source of the oil is unknown and currently under investigation.

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