

Notable tanker incidents

1967

Torrey Canyon

On 18 March, 1967 the Torrey Canyon struck Pollard's Rock in the Seven Stones reef between the Scilly Isles and Land's End, England. The oil leaked from the ship (31,000,000 gallons) and spread along the sea between England and France, killing marine life and blighting the region for many years thereafter.

1970

Othello

On 20 March 1970 at least 438,000 barrels of oil spilled in a collision involving the Othello in Tralhavet Bay, Sweden.

1972

Sea Star

On 19 December 1972 in Oman the Sea Star tanker collided with the Brazilian tanker Horta Barbosa and spilled about 840,000 barrels of crude into the Gulf of Oman.

1976

The Argo Merchant

Ran aground on 15 December off Nantucket (USA) spilling 183,000 barrels of oil and causing a slick 160 km (100 miles) long and 97 km wide.

1977

Hawaiian Patriot

Caught fire on 25 February in the Northern Pacific spilling 723,000 barrels just off the Hawaiian coast.

1978

The Amoco Cadiz

Ran aground on 16 March 1978, polluting 240 miles of Brittany's coast with 223,000 tons of crude oil. The Amoco Cadiz was 65m longer than the Titanic, with a volume five times greater.

1979

Atlantic Empress and the Aegean Captain

On 19 July the Atlantic Empress and the Aegean Captain collided around Trinidad & Tobago. About 2.2 million barrels of crude spilled into the sea.

1983

Castillo de Bellver

On 6 August, fire broke out on the Spanish tanker Castillo de Bellver and 1.8 million barrels of light crude burnt off the coast at Cape Town.

1989

Exxon Valdez

On 24 March the Exxon Valdez hit rocks in Prince William Sound spilling some 240,000 barrels of crude oil onto Alaskan shores.

1989

Kharg-5

On 19 December, 1989 Iranian tanker Kharg-5 was abandoned after explosions and a fire caused 70,000 tonnes of crude oil to spill, endangering the coast and oyster beds at Oualidia.

1990

American Trader

On 7 February the tanker, American Trader, leaked 300,000 gallons of crude from a gash in the hull causing an oil slick 22 km long polluting Bosa Chica, one of southern California's biggest nature preserves.

1991

ABT Summer

On 28 May the Liberian-registered supertanker leaked oil after an explosion off Angola causing an oil slick 17 nautical miles by three.

1992

Nagasaki Spirit

On 19 September the Liberian-registered tanker Nagasaki Spirit collided with container Ocean Blessing in the Malacca Straits spilling some 12,000 tonnes of crude oil into the sea.

1992

Aegean Sea

On 3 December the Greek tanker Aegean Sea ran aground and broke in two near La Coruna spilling most of its 80,000 tonne cargo of oil.

1993

BRAER

On January 6, 1993, the Liberian tanker BRAER ran aground on Garth Ness, a peninsula off the southern tip of the Shetland Islands. At 10.55am two tugs began trying to pull the tanker away from the rocky coastline, but twenty minutes later the Braer with it's 619,300 barrels of oil (about 130,000 tonnes) ran aground and began leaking oil. The oil the Braer was carrying was a light crude oil which is easily dispersed by large waves, and 70% of the oil either evaporated or dispersed naturally.

1996

The Sea Empress

First holed just outside the mouth of Milford Haven on 15th February, 1996. The incident caused what has been by far the largest oil spill in the region, involving the release of the order of 70,000 tonnes of North Sea light crude oil.

1998**MV Pallas**

On 25 October the MV Pallas experienced a heavy fire onboard in the waters south west of the Danish city Esbjerg. One crew member died in the accident. Several attempts to tug her to the open North Sea failed. Since, parts of the 600 tons of fuel oil and oil sludge onboard the vessel have steadily been released into the sea through the damaged ship hull.

1999**Erika**

On 12 December 1999 Erika broke in two, leaking 15,000 tonnes of heavy oil near Brittany. Almost 400km of coastline was soaked in oil.

2000**Ievoli Sun**

10 months after the Erika disaster, on 31 October 2000 the Ievoli sun carrying 6,000 tonnes of toxic chemicals sank in the English Channel. The Ievoli Sun got into difficulties in heavy seas and sank 11 miles (18 km) north-west of the Channel island of Alderney.

2001**Baltic Carrier**

On 27 March 2000, the Baltic Carrier collided with a cargo ship carrying sugar. Over 3,000 tonnes of oil was spilt near the coast of Denmark (the Baltic was carrying 33,000 tonnes).