

Migratory birds threatened by oil spill

by UPI

SEOUL -- An oil slick from South Korea's largest oil spill 10 days ago is spreading havoc along the scenic west coast, threatening the sanctuary of migratory birds. South Korea's Coast Guard said Monday the oil slick, already more than 320 feet long, is located at the mouth of the Cheonsuman Bay, Yonhap news agency reported. The slick was created when tar-like clumps of oil melted in warmer water temperatures, officials said. Gusty winds and high waves have hampered cleanup efforts since the Dec. 7 incident, in which about 10,500 tons of crude oil leaked into the Yellow Sea off Taean in central South Korea after a crane barge rammed into a Hong Kong-registered tanker. Authorities fear the oil slick may flow into the bay on a northward tide, threatening the winter home of migratory birds and fisheries in the bay, the report said. Cleanup crews are struggling to collect the oil clumps as they wash ashore. The clumps can also kill fish, marine plants and plankton in the sea. The cleanup effort involves some 30,000 people, supported by 330 vessels and 17 aircraft. Officials said about 30 percent of the leaked oil has been collected.

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