

Oil Spill Spreads to Costa Rica, Threatening Biodiversity



San Jose, August 24 (RHC)-- Multinational oil company Puma Energy may be responsible for a major oil spill in the tourist destination Puerto Sandino, on Nicaragua's Pacific coast, contaminating nearly a mile of mangroves and now the coasts of Honduras and Costa Rica.

Costa Rica University oceanographer Omar Lizano reported that the oil had reached the Gulf of Fonseca, shared by the three Central American countries, and was now affecting the beaches and mangroves' exceptional biodiversity.

The spill followed an explosion involving two of the company's four tanks that stored oil-derived products, the local environment group Humboldt Center said at a press conference over the weekend. The center demanded immediate measures to at least slow down what it described as ongoing environmental damage.

Beside the mangroves, the oil was also swept into the ocean while the tide rose. Corpses of fish, turtles and crabs started accumulating everywhere, according to La Prensa.

The fire started Wednesday afternoon in one of the tank, which exploded, and spread a few hours later to a second tank. Because of the oil-derived products, the fire did not stop before Saturday.

The Sandinista government has implemented an action plan in a bid to control the fire and provide health care to the residents. In a joint press conference with Puma Energy, the government also announced a range of measures to address the contamination.

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