

Japan's largest oil spill heads for main coast

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP) — A supertanker ran aground today in busy Tokyo Bay, dumping nearly 4 million gallons of crude oil in Japan's worst spill ever and threatening the fishing grounds that help feed its most crowded region.

The spill released noxious fumes that sickened more than a dozen people on shore, mostly children. As the fumes abated, concern over the spill shifted from the possible risk of fires to its impact on the environment.

The 147,012-ton, Panamanian-registered Diamond Grace ran aground less than four miles off Yokohama and 22 miles southwest of Tokyo. Officials said the light crude oil had stopped leaking about 1 1/2 hours after the accident in one of Japan's busiest bays.

The tanker was dislodged by nightfall and went under its own power to near-Kawasaki, where its remaining oil was removed. The 3 1/2-mile-wide spill

was drifting north toward Tokyo.

"This is the worst oil spill Japan has ever experienced," said Transportation Minister Makoto Koga.

The spill threatens to sully the fishing grounds in Japan's most heavily populated region. The sprawling Tokyo metropolitan area — which encompasses Yokohama, Kawasaki and Chiba — rings the bay and is home to 25 million people.

Authorities initially feared a spark could set the spill on fire. A dozen coast guard boats patrolled the fouled bay, warning fishermen to keep their distance and avoid using cigarette lighters or matches.

About 40 boats were throwing absorbent mats onto the water to soak up the crude. A helicopter sprayed solvents to break up the oil and workers used everything from barrels to ladders to scoop it up. The cleanup was to continue through the night.

Coast guard helicopters hovered over the bay. The oil sparkled on the

water, with the silhouette of Mount Fuji in the distance.

The Maritime Safety Agency, Japan's coast guard, said the tanker dumped nearly twice as much as Japan's previous worst spill in 1974, when 2 million gallons poured from a storage tank in southwestern Japan.

The Exxon Valdez tanker spilled 11 million gallons in Alaska in 1989.

The Kyodo News agency said the tanker scraped a reef in shallow waters, tearing holes in two oil tanks near the starboard bow. Officials were questioning the captain, Kyodo said.

Government investigator Shigehiro Sakamoto said three tanks were damaged, but only two of them held oil. He said officials were investigating exactly what the tanker hit. One of the gashes was 10 feet long.

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Community celebration Olsen Field hosts events

BY JENARA KOCKS
 THE BATTALION

Residents of Bryan-College Station can celebrate America's independence at the "I Love America" celebration at Olsen Baseball Field on Friday, July 4.

The event begins at 5:30 p.m. with a dunking booth and other games for kids and country music by Texas Wind. Other musical entertainers, including KBTX-TV meteorologist Bob French, The Children's Troupe, Kathy Ross and Brazos Valley Chorale, will perform from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. The audience also will be able to participate in a patriotic sing along. A fireworks display will begin at 9:40 p.m.

The event is sponsored by the College

Station Noon Lions Club, the cities of Bryan and College Station, KBTX-TV, KKYI Radio and The Eagle.

Jennifer Bohac, president of the College Station Noon Lions Club, said that for 30 years, the club has sponsored a Fourth of July celebration that Bryan-College Station residents can enjoy for free.

"The celebration is a way for the Lions Club to give back to the community because the community gives so much to us," Bohac said.

Bohac said between \$6,000 and \$10,000 worth of fireworks will be set off at Olsen Field Friday. She said the majority of the funding for the fireworks came from donations and sponsors such as Bryan and College Station.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Worth Zoo honors Jimmy Stewart

FORT WORTH (AP) — Jimmy Stewart's legacy will reach beyond movie history to include his support of the Fort Worth Zoo, zoo officials said Wednesday.

Stewart served on the zoo's board of directors in the 1950s and was considered a generous contributor.

The actor best known for his role in "It's a Wonderful Life" died of a blood clot in the lung Wednesday at the age of 89.

Stewart became involved with the zoo in the 1950s because he was good friends with one of its founders, Kirk Johnson, zoo spokeswoman Rena Lewis said.

Stewart dies at California home

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The actor died at his Beverly Hills home, the Hollywood Variety columnist said.

A former amateur magician, Stewart conjured up some of the most memorable performances in cinema history, appearing in more than 75 films.

Stewart won a best actor Academy Award for "The Philadelphia Story" and was nominated for the star four other times.

He starred in such righteous roles as "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," "Destry Rides Again" and "The Flight of the Phoenix." He also played more doubled characters in films like Alfred Hitchcock's "Vertigo."



PHOTOGRAPH: Shannon Castle

Hanging Around Marvin Seal climbs the rock wall at the Rec Center on Wednesday.

Off-campus housing grows; more vacancies produced

BY ROBERT SMITH
 THE BATTALION

Students searching for off-campus housing may now have an easier time finding a place to live because housing development in Bryan-College Station has increased over the past four years.

Victor Romero Jr., a lease specialist for the Department of Student Life, said the occupancy rate for Bryan and College Station apartments has decreased since four years ago.

"Four years ago there was a 100-percent occupancy rate," he said. "Right now, I'd say it's at about 90 or 91 percent. We expect it to go up to about 95 percent in the fall."

Rosemarie Selman, a Bryan-College Station Apartment Association executive, said recent increases in apartment construction have produced more vacancies.

"From June 1993 to December 1996, there has been an increase of 1,939 rental units in College Station," she said. "There has also been 500 rental units added in Bryan during the same time."

Selman said she expects the occupancy rate to increase to 92-93 percent in the fall.

Selman said there has been a significant amount of apartment development on Holleman Street.

"Arbors and Jefferson Ridge are both new complexes in that area," Selman said. "There are many units in a tight radius."

Selman said many apartments being built are designed with student-oriented amenities.

"Many are now offering computer labs to attract students," Selman said.

The Department of Student Life's housing guide lists 17 apartment complexes with computer labs and/or Internet access.

Future development will add to the number of rental units in College Station.

A 460-unit apartment complex is being planned for development on Highway 2818, and a 250-unit-apartment at Wellborn and Holleman will be completed in August.

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Putting a Roof Over Aggies' Heads

Monday - Residence Hall Blues

Tuesday - Shaping Up Campus Housing

Wednesday - Off-Campus Woes

Thursday - Future of Off-Campus Living

GRAPHIC: Tim Moog

TODAY IN BATTALION

LIFESTYLES

Born to be wild: Aggies take adventure into the streets of B-CS.

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OPINION

One: Texas misses mark with effectiveness of the death penalty.

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ONLINE

http://bat-web.tamu.edu

See links to related articles.

Killer bees migrate north; Texas counties quarantined

At least eight injured in attack by aggressive bees

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — At least eight people were stung and police cordoned off a four-block area after a lawn-mowing crew apparently disturbed thousands of swarming bees.

Ambulances and fire trucks were dispatched during the emergency Tuesday afternoon, as authorities warned everyone in the neighborhood to stay inside their homes.

All those stung by the bees — seven adults and a young girl — were treated by emergency technicians at the scene. None were seriously injured.

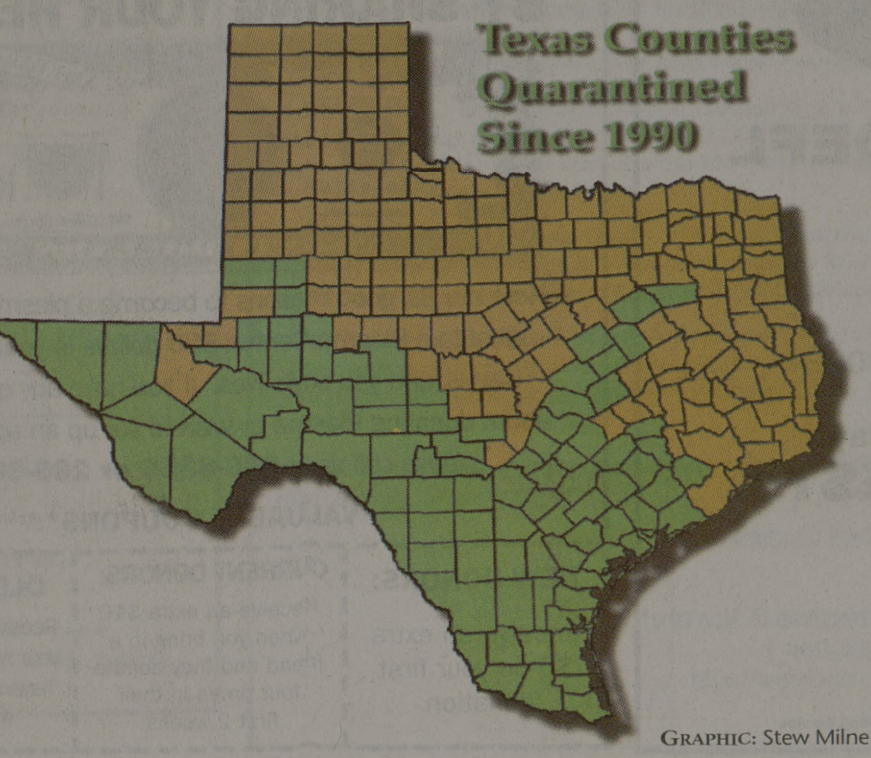
The bees came from an abandoned lumber yard near an alley, fire department officials said. A sampling of the bees was taken to determine whether they were the more aggressive Africanized variety.

Yolanda Alviso, 14, who lives across the street from a house where one attack took place, said three men were using a lawn mower to cut grass when they suddenly started swatting themselves and yelling.

"We were looking when all the bees were on the man. He was all freaked out. He was putting water on him. He looked scared," Alviso said. "I don't know what happened, but all the bees came out."

Julie Trujillo, 14, and several friends were walking along a street when they heard a loud buzzing sound, she said.

Africanized "Killer" Bees



A&M technicians study new bee swarming cases

BY JOHN LEBAS
 THE BATTALION

Texas Honey Bee Identification Lab Director Lisa Bradley, who dissects and identifies honey bee species at the Texas A&M-Riverside facility, is swamped this bee swarming season with samples from Texans worried they may have discovered Africanized honey bees.

"Last year, I didn't receive many [bee] samples because it was so dry the bees weren't doing much," Bradley said. "But this month has been bad."

Africanized bees, hybrids of traditionally commercial European honey bees and their African relatives, have been detected throughout southern and western Texas since 1990. But although about 20 percent of the samples Bradley recently has analyzed were Africanized bees, no "killer" bees have ever been found in Brazos County.

Dr. Rodney Holloway, an extension specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, said killer bees are not a menace to Bryan-College Station.

"The Africanized bee situation has not been shown to be anywhere near as dangerous as was once perceived," Holloway said.

Please see BEES on Page 6.

GRAPHIC: Stew Milne

Please see STUDY on Page 6.