**CASE STUDY - ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER**

***The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill***



**When?**

23rd of March 1989

**What?**

Oil tanker EXXON Valdez ran into Bligh Reef = 260,000 to 750,000 barrels of crude oil was spilled in Prince William Sounds (Alaska) = considered to be one of the most devastating human caused environmental disasters

**Effects?**

Short term:

* deaths of  250,000 seabirds + 2,800 sea otters + 300 harbour seals+ 247 Bald Eagles + 22 Orcas+ 1000 harlequin ducks many salmon and herring in the following days
* 1,300 miles of coastline hit by the oil spill

Long term:

* chronic injuries for animals= still not fully recovered
* Many fish populations were harmed during the spill + south-western part of Prince William Sound lost 28% of potential stock of wild pink salmon=over $300 million economic loss to more than 32000 people who depended on commercial fishing
* Salmon eggs exposed to the oil= increased salmon mortality for 4 years after the spill= contaminated food chain= larger marine mammals and ducks suffered illnesses
* Following year, tourism spending= - 8% in south central Alaska and -35% in southwest Alaska
* loss of 9,400 visitors
* Loss of $5.5 million in state spending.
* 12 years after the spill, oil could still be found on randomly selected beaches on the coast

**Solutions?**

* The clean-up required about 10,000 workers+ 1,000 boats + 100 airplanes / helicopters.
* Four deaths were directly associated with clean-up efforts.