The Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred in Prince William Sound, Alaska, on March 24, 1989, when Exxon Valdez, an oil tanker bound for Long Beach, California, struck Prince William Sound's Bligh Reef at 12:04 a.m., local time and spilled 11,000,000 to 38,000,000 gallons of crude oil over the next few days. Large quantities of fresh oil washed up on the rocky shores of many of the beaches in the Knight Island chain. In this photograph, pooled black oil is shown stranded on the rocks, widespread throughout the industry, prompting. A private company applied dispersant on March of the Coast Guard tracking ships out to Bligh Reef 24 with a helicopter and dispersant bucket.