

# Studies on the Short-Term Effects of the Mobil Idoho Oil Spill on the Littoral Biota of Southeastern Nigeria

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## Abstract

Quantitative surveys of the intertidal macro-fauna were conducted during September-October 1998 along transects established at various locations along the Nigeria coastline, following the rupture of a 24-inch pipeline at Idoho, off the Gulf of Guinea, southeastern Nigeria on 12 January 1998. Samples were taken within impacted areas and at control unpolluted sites approximately 5 km to the east of the Idoho off-shore platform. Spilled oil moved rapidly ashore and into river mouths, and estuaries and their mangals shortly after the spills. Biomass of macrofauna in the impacted areas tended to decrease with level of oiling, as the mean abundance decreased rapidly to about 50% of that found on the control unpolluted sites. Edible gastropod, mainly species of *Tympanotomus fuscatus*, and the brachyuran decapod, *Uca tangeri*, typically consumed by coastal inhabitants, had reduction in mean densities (up to 62%) in the oiled Bonny, Brass, Lagos and Forcados than in the non-oiled areas of Imo, Andoni and Cross River, showing partial recovery of the environment from the debacle after 9 months. The ecological implications of these findings are discussed.