DAMAGE ASSESSMENT, REMEDIATION, & RESTORATION PROGRAM

DARRP

Office of Response and Restoration • Office of Habitat Conservation • General Counsel for Natural Resources

Suisun Bay National Reserve Fleet Assessment Project

Update – SEPTEMBER, 2008

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration is investigating environmental contaminants in and around the National Reserve Fleet in Suisun Bay, California. In July and August, NOAA's team collected surface and subsurface sediment samples, as well as tissue samples from mussels and clams. The samples are being analyzed for contaminants and a data report is planned for early 2009. This fact sheet is part of continuing series of monthly updates.

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) collaborates with other agencies, industry, and citizens to protect and restore coastal and marine resources threatened or injured by oil spills, releases of hazardous substances, and vessel groundings.

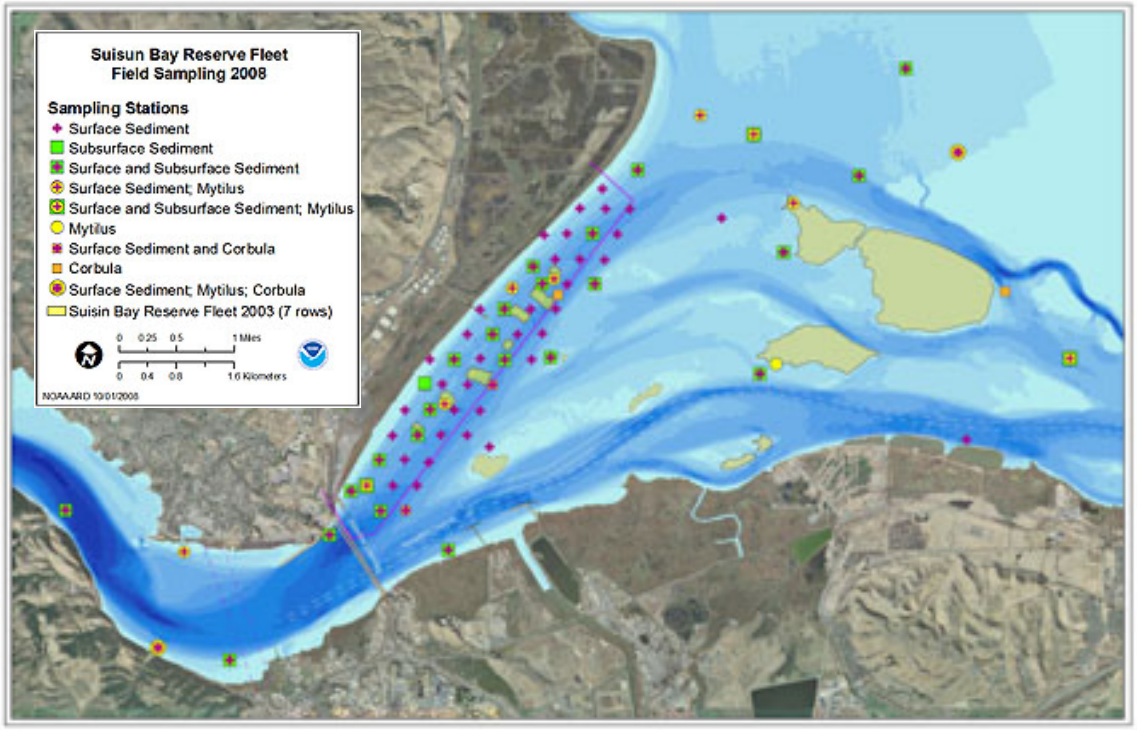
Recent Progress

The recently collected tissue samples are still being processed by the analytical laboratories, but the sediment data has been analyzed and is currently going through the quality assurance process.

NOAA partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in September to collect six additional clam samples. USGS generously donated field equipment and staff time to the effort. The samples will be processed using the protocols of an ongoing USGS study that is evaluating metal uptake in clams in San Francisco Bay.

The clams collected in July were very small, which raised concern that we would not have enough tissue to run the full range of chemical analyses as originally planned. This concern prompted the second round of sampling with USGS in September. Unfortunately, the clams collected in September also were small. We will analyze both sets of samples, and the laboratories will initially look for metals, then PAHs and PCBs if we have sufficient tissue volume.

Additional analysis was performed on samples suspected of containing paint chips or metal debris. Using higher magnification equipment than was available in the field, NOAA scientists re-examined a subset of the surface samples to determine whether they contained paint chips, metal debris, or simply naturally occurring minerals.



This Figure shows the station locations where the NOAA field team collected samples. The various symbols represent the types of samples that were collected at each location.

Next Steps

NOAA's team is analyzing the sediment data, developing the outline for the data report, and drafting the background and methods sections.

Tissue chemistry results are due back from the laboratories at the end of Oct. and will be evaluated by the NOAA team.

A stakeholder meeting is planned for late October. At this meeting, NOAA will discuss the preliminary paint chip data results and the report preparation schedule.

Surface sediment was collected and sieved in order to obtain resident clams.

The resident clams collected for tissue analysis were tiny, so dozens of clams were needed to generate enough material for one sample.

Suisun Bay Timeline

2008

- **J, F:** January 2008 thru March: Information gathering
- **M, A:** March thru April: develop draft sampling plan
- **M, J:** May to June: Revise and finalize sampling plan
- **J:** July: Field work
- **A, S:** July to September: Chemical analysis of samples
- **O:** October: Data analysis and preliminary interpretations
- **N:** November: Solicit preliminary comments from technical representatives of stakeholders
- **D:** December to January 2009: Prepare draft report and recommendations

2009

- **J, F:** February 2009: Finalize report

For More Information

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