



# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

## JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Tar balls drift north, GLO Oil Spill crews prepare for landfall *Texas General Land Office Oil Spill officials working to protect Texas coast*

AUSTIN — Tar balls that have peppered the lower Texas coast continue to drift north, but Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said Tuesday Texas General Land Office Oil Spill officials are preparing to clean the beaches before they even arrive.

“While we still don’t know the source of this oil, it is definitely drifting north,” Patterson said. “Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response teams are working with U.S. Coast Guard officials to have crews on standby, ready to clean the beaches, wherever the tar balls wash up.”

Patterson said that while crews working to clean up the tar balls are required by federal regulations to wear protective clothing, the beaches are safe and open to the public. “If you step on a tar ball, just use some baby oil to clean it off,” Patterson said. “We’re working to get this mess cleaned up quickly and we don’t expect the job to last more than a couple of days.”

Cleanup of Padre Island National Seashore continued Tuesday as reports of nickel and quarter-sized tar balls on Mustang Island continued to come in. Texas General Land Office Oil Spill teams are working with the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Park Service to clean up the tar balls, which began washing ashore on Padre Island National Seashore Sunday.

The tar balls first began washing up late last week, when what appeared to be fresh crude was spotted at Boca Chica beach and the Town of South Padre Island. The tar balls that have been washing up farther north along the coast since then appear to be more weathered and have become more dispersed in their distribution.

The cleanup of the affected area now stretches from Mustang Island State Park to all the way south to Mile Marker 60 on Padre Island National Seashore. Sporadic patches of beach along the affected area are speckled with nickel-sized tar balls.

“Land Office crews are patrolling the beaches, scouting for more tar balls, responding to citizens reports of tar balls, assessing the environmental impacts and making recommendations on where cleanup assets are most needed,” Patterson said. “This cleanup is going well and so far we’ve had limited environmental impact, including just one bird death on South Padre Island.”

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