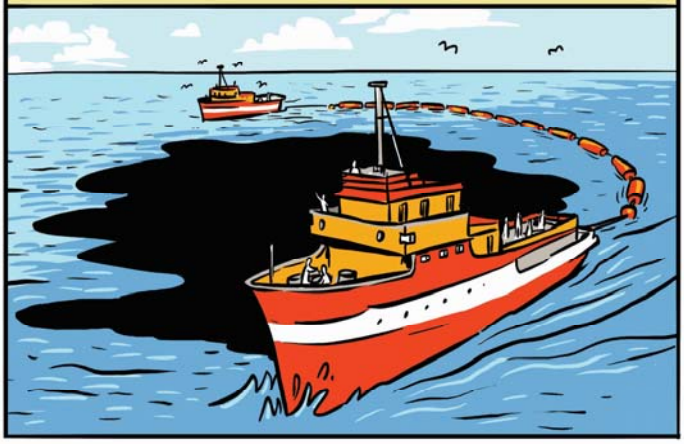
Once oil has spilled in the water, the response must be quick.

Most measures to minimize damage from spills only work on relatively fresh oil, as their effectiveness decrease as the viscosity of the residual oil increases as a result of processes such as evaporation,or exposure to sunlight

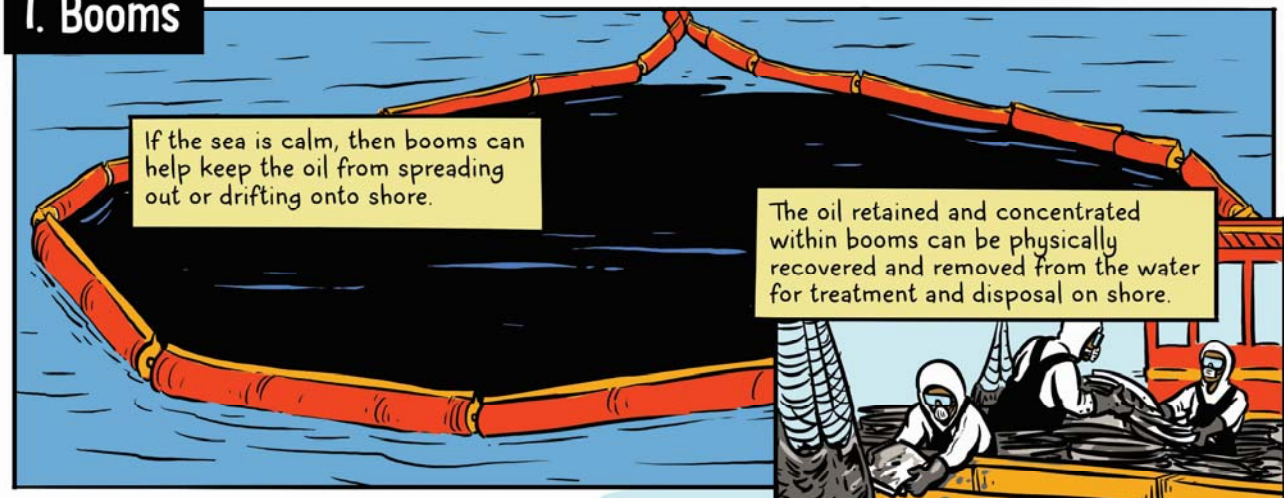


To make good decisions, models are used to predict the fate of the oil without interference as well as the possible effects of different response scenarios.

The best combination of response options is different in every case, depending on the type of oil spilled, weather conditions, the place of the spill, and the circumstances.

Here are 3 different ways that oil spills are addressed:

1. Booms



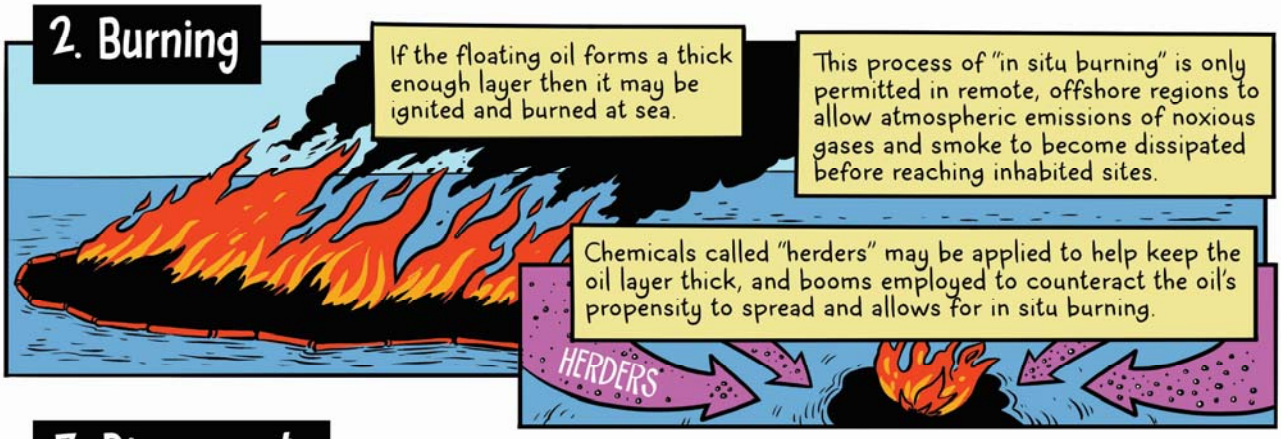
If the sea is calm, then booms can help keep the oil from spreading out or drifting onto shore.

The oil retained and concentrated within booms can be physically recovered and removed from the water for treatment and disposal on shore.

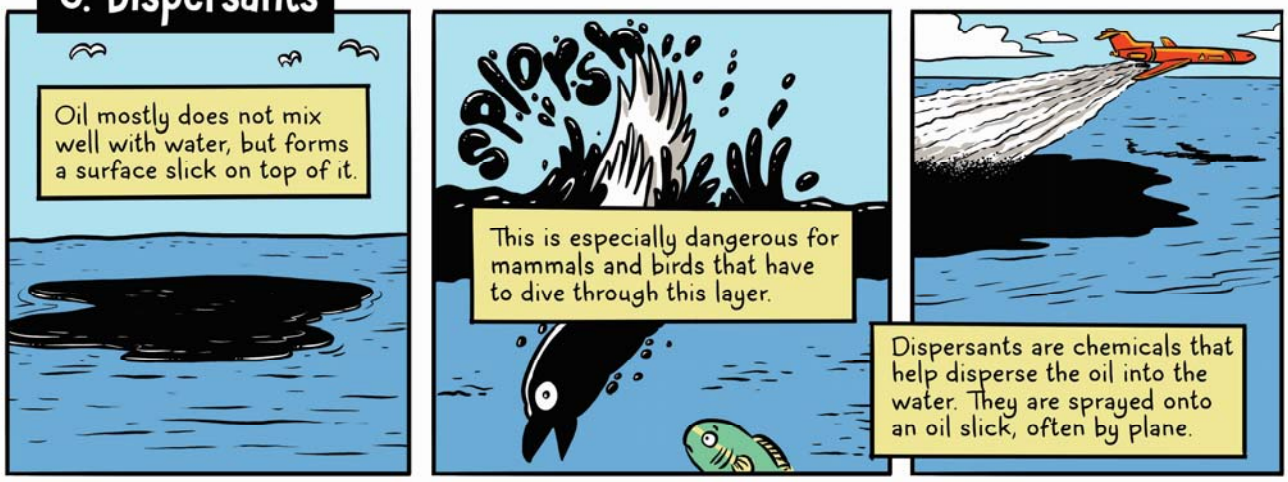
There are different methods of safe and efficient retrieval, such as the use of absorbent materials or mechanical skimming devices. These continue to be researched and developed.

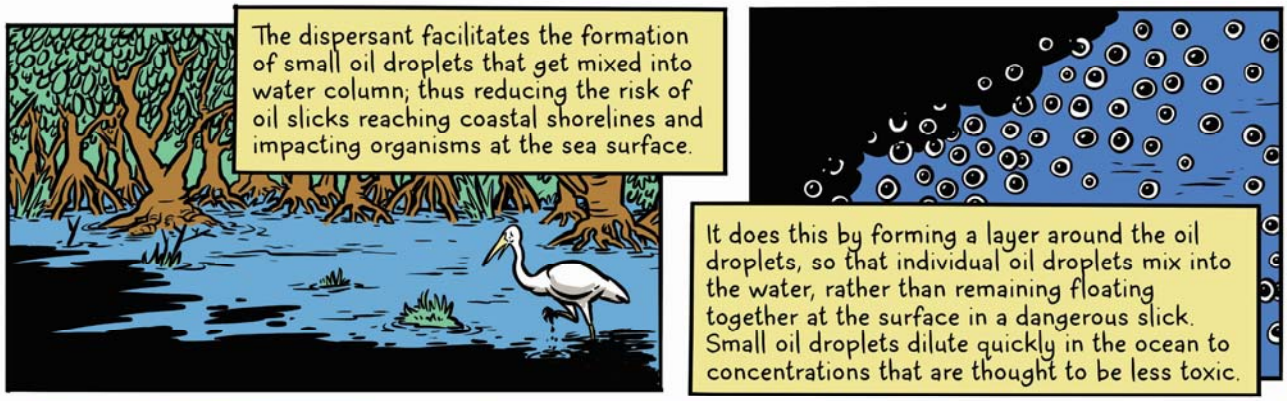
Disposal of the recovered oil remains a challenge, as a substantial amount of water may be recovered along with the oil. The need to process and transport waste for disposal on shore can limit operational effectiveness.

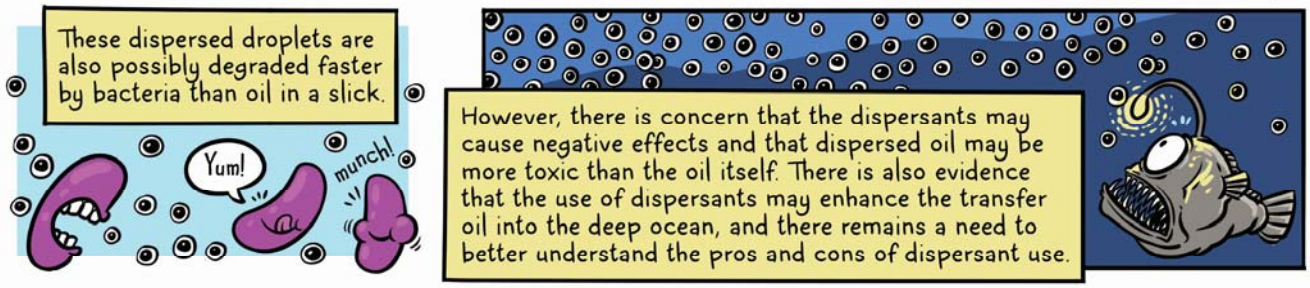
2. Burning



3. Dispersants







When oil spills in water, responders do what they can to protect the marine environment and its living resources. It is also important not to endanger the people responding to the spill or in communities nearby.