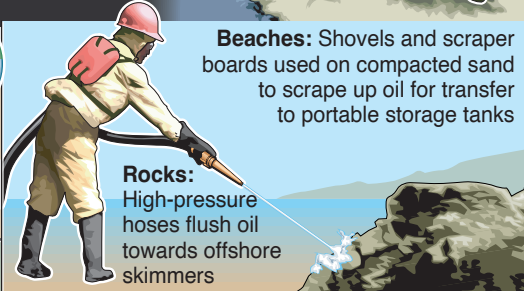


Cleaning up the oil spill

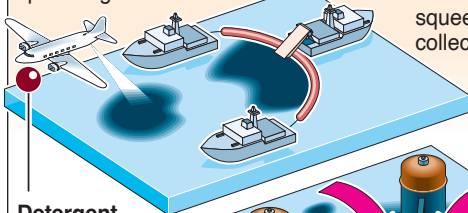
Poor weather is hampering efforts to prevent further oil slicks from the sunken tanker *Prestige* devastating the northwest coast of Spain. Around 90 beaches have so far been affected – the clean-up operation is expected to last at least six months and cost over \$40 million



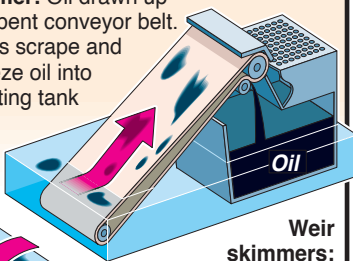
Beaches: Shovels and scraper boards used on compacted sand to scrape up oil for transfer to portable storage tanks

Rocks: High-pressure hoses flush oil towards offshore skimmers

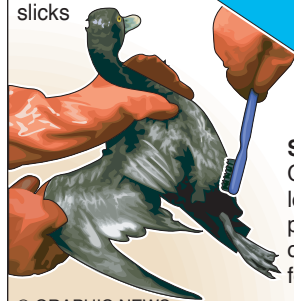
Booms: Floating inflatable tubes prevent slicks from spreading



Skimmer: Oil drawn up absorbent conveyor belt. Rollers scrape and squeeze oil into collecting tank



Detergent sprays: Chemicals break up oil into droplets, dispersing larger slicks



Seabirds: Oiled feathers lose insulating properties. More oil ingested when feeding or cleaning



Weir skimmers: Oil flows over rim of open-topped drum. Can be fitted with screw pumps – better for recovering more viscous oils

Filter-feeders: May be smothered by oil, or suffocated as tainted water passes through gills. **Galicia is world's largest mussel-growing region**