

Whale ship joins Gulf oil cleanup

The latest weapon in the battle to clean up the Gulf of Mexico oil spill is a giant supertanker dubbed the “*Whale*”. The Taiwanese vessel, billed as the world’s largest oil skimmer, is awaiting test results and approval from U.S. regulators before joining the operation to block millions of gallons of oil from reaching land

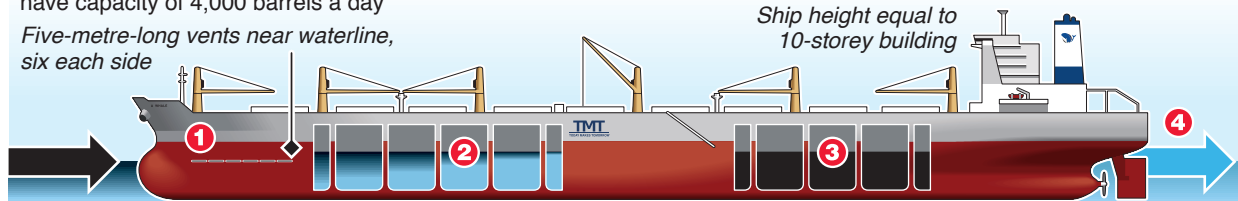
1 Intake vents on bow of ship can skim up to 500,000 barrels (21 million gallons) of oil-contaminated water per day, according to ship’s owners – largest vessels currently involved in cleanup have capacity of 4,000 barrels a day

Five-metre-long vents near waterline, six each side



*The supertanker was quickly converted after the April 20 **Deepwater Horizon** oil rig explosion*

Ship height equal to 10-storey building



2 Oily water is pumped through series of large **internal tanks** that separate mixture by gravity

3 Remaining tanks collect oil for transfer to shore facility

4 Treated water, containing only traces of oil, discharged into Gulf

SHIP SIZES

A Whale: **340m**

USS Nimitz aircraft carrier: **333m**

Maersk E-class* **397m**



“A WHALE” SPECIFICATIONS

Deadweight	319,000 tonnes
Length	340 metres
Beam	60 metres
Speed	13.7 knots (25.4km/h)
Crew	32