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TITLE: Footprint of <i>Deepwater Horizon</i> blowout impact to deep-water coral communities

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ABSTRACT:

Significance The Deepwater Horizon blowout released more oil and gas into the deep sea than any previous spill. Soon after the well was capped, a deep-sea community 13 km southwest of the wellhead was discovered with corals that had been damaged by the spill. Here we show this was not an isolated incident; at least two other coral communities were also impacted by the spill. One was almost twice as far from the wellhead and in 50% deeper water, considerably expanding the known area of impact. In addition, two of four other newly discovered coral communities in the region were fouled with commercial fishing line, indicating a large cumulative effect of anthropogenic activities on the corals of the deep Gulf of Mexico.

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