



Accuracy, Integrity, Service

# Vessel with Intrinsic Petroleum Ensnaring and Recovery Systems (VIPER)

## Clients:

National Marine Fisheries Service  
Silver Spring, MD  
Tel: 301-713-2328

BP Exploration and Production, Inc.  
Houston, TX  
Tel: 281-366-8156

## Performance Period:

June 2010 to April 2011

## Key Services:

- Marie Mammal Observation
- Data collection and Documentation
- Compliance monitoring
- Inventory management
- Monitoring protocol development
- Chain of custody

As part of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill recovery in the Gulf of Mexico, the Vessel with Intrinsic Petroleum Ensnaring and Recovery System (VIPER) project was used to detect submerged oil. The approach was developed by the U.S. Coast Guard to allow the utilization of existing equipment to augment traditional skimming technologies.



During this project, six commercial shrimp vessels equipped their trawl nets with specialized oil absorbent mats. Each vessel towed their twin nets along the three nautical mile line between Cat Island, Mississippi and Panama City, Florida. Each boat was assigned a specific tow depth to ensure the entire water column would be sampled. The mats in the net were capable of picking-up tar mats and tar balls in addition to detecting the presence of trace amounts of oil.



Following each tow, an environmental technician inspected each absorbent mat for the presence of oil under UV light. A.I.S., Inc. deployed one observer on each vessel to monitor the operation for the presence of sea turtles and other sensitive marine wildlife. The observers documented their monitoring effort, vessel activity, wildlife sightings and completed chain of custody forms. All data and digital images were delivered to the National Marine Fisheries Service at the completion of the project.

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