

## Loop Current splitting; could shield Florida from oil spill

Dave Heller • 10 Connects • May 21, 2010

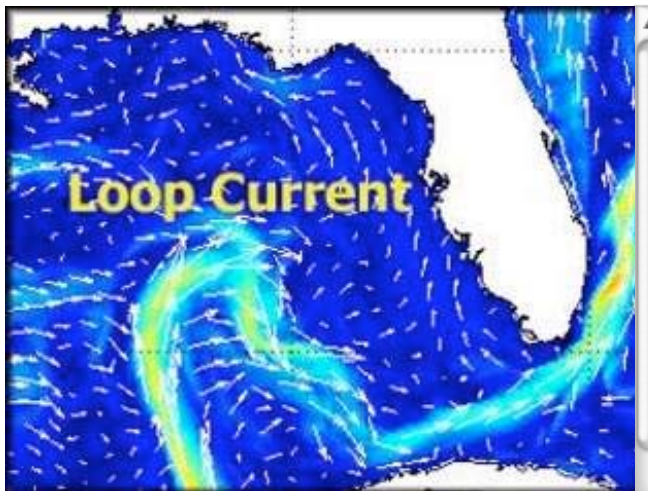
Ocean researchers at Florida State say something interesting is happening with the Gulf of Mexico's Loop Current that might actually shield Florida from the Deepwater Horizon spill.

New data shows the northern part of the Loop Current is detaching from the southern half. If that happens, it would cut off a path for oil to travel south toward the Florida Keys and up the Atlantic Coast.

Scientist Dmitry Dukhovskoy says this process of shedding in the Loop Current happens about every nine months and it's due to occur again.

"It may be a good thing for Florida, because if this happens, most of the oil will stay in the Gulf and it won't propagate toward the Florida Keys. However, it's probably not a good thing for Texas."

It may take days or a week for the northern flow to completely detach from the Loop Current. However, Dukhovskoy says it could reattach and become a single flow again so scientists are closely watching it.



The Loop Current in the Gulf of Mexico.

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