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The emerging consensus among government and independent scientists is that roughly five million barrels of oil were released by the Macondo well, with over four million barrels pouring into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Using different methods, these different groups of scientists arrived at the same approximate figure.

¹⁰ BP has a strong financial incentive to challenge the government's final flow-rate estimate. Under the Clean Water Act, BP can be fined up to \$37,500 per day for unpermitted discharges of oil, or up to \$1,100 per barrel of oil.