

Production affected by White Rose oil spill

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A small quantity of oil spilled into the Atlantic Ocean Tuesday near a floating platform drilling off Newfoundland's southeast coast, the operator said.

Husky Energy said production has been scaled back as repairs are made to a broken hose, which caused as many as much as 30 barrels of oil to spill into the ocean Tuesday near the floating platform at the White Rose field.

Trevor Prichard, general manager of production operations with Husky, said Wednesday that the latest aerial surveillance showed that oil was being dispersed in the water. Crews, though, are attempting to collect as much of the oil as possible.

White Rose managers do not know what caused the hose to break.

"At this moment in time, we're unsure," Prichard told CBC News on Wednesday morning.

"We need to investigate how the hose broke, so we'll be recovering the equipment — we have it in quarantine offshore at the moment, and that needs to be transported onshore for further investigation."

Prichard said production will not return to full capacity until the hose is repaired.

Meanwhile, Prichard said there is no evidence to show that wildlife in the area were affected by the spill. The aerial surveillance detected one whale in the area. Prichard said there are no signs that seabirds were affected by the contamination. The spill happened Tuesday morning, as crews were offloading crude oil into an adjacent tanker.

The spill is considered fairly minor. In November 2004, almost 1,000 barrels of oil flowed into the ocean after a mechanical failure occurred at the nearby Terra Nova field. The resulting slick expanded to nine kilometres in length and one kilometre in width.