

## Track methane to gauge size of BP spill: scientist

Reuters

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - To figure out how much oil has spilled into the Gulf of Mexico, experts should measure the plumes of dissolved methane coming from the wrecked BP offshore rig, a marine scientist said on Sunday.

Methane gas is the most abundant compound coming from the April 20 blowout and spill, making up about 40 percent of the leaking petroleum by mass, David Valentine of the University of California-Santa Barbara wrote in an opinion article in the journal Nature.

"Although methane from surface-vessel spills or shallow-water blowouts escapes into the air, I expect that the vast majority of methane making the long trip to the sea surface from a deep-water spill would dissolve," he wrote.

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