

Condition of Marooned New Zealand Ship Worsens

the Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — The condition of a cargo ship stranded on a New Zealand reef for nearly a month has worsened, and authorities say they are preparing for it to break apart.

Salvage crews have been in a stop-start race to remove oil from the vessel Rena to prevent it from leaking into the ocean. Before bad weather forced them to halt efforts Sunday, crews had removed more than 1,100 tons of oil. An estimated 385 tons remain on board — about the same amount that has already leaked into the sea.

The ship has been stranded since Oct. 5 on the reef, which is about 14 miles (23 kilometers) from Tauranga Harbour on the North Island.

Maritime New Zealand said Tuesday that a team has attached the stern of the ship to a barge and will drag it to shallower water if the vessel breaks apart.

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