



## Oil Spill Fines Come Through for BP and ConocoPhillips Subsidiary

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Two major settlements relating to oil spills were reached this week. Polar Tankers, a subsidiary of ConocoPhillips, was fined [\\$2.5 million dollars](#) for an oil spill in the Pacific Ocean in 2004. A criminal penalty represented \$500,000 of the fine, and the other \$2 million went to the [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#), a nonprofit organization established by Congress in 1984.

While it is not known how much oil was spilled into the ocean, or where exactly the spill took place, it has been reported that at one point the ship's captain turned the vessel into the wind in order to clean the sludge from the side of the ship. He justified his actions by claiming it was a "man overboard" drill. He was fired, along with the ship's chief engineer.

The crew member who blew the whistle on the Polar Tanker crime received half of the \$500,000 fine as a reward. Not a bad way to encourage more employees to speak up about corporate bad guys. Although, as a [story yesterday in the New York Times](#) reminded all would-be whistle blowers: No, you don't get anything for reporting your own crime.

The second fine this week was a tad heftier: \$373 million dollars. The U.S. Department of Justice came down with a vengeance on BP (formerly British Petroleum) for a multitude of oil-related offenses, including two spills in Alaska in 2006. These spills [accounted for \\$20 million](#) of the total fine. [Prosecutors](#) argued that BP neglected corroding pipelines that resulted in the spills. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will get \$4 million from this settlement.