

Chapter 13

COMMUNITY DYNAMICS—FOOD WEBS

IN THE NEWS

On 24 March 1989 the oil tanker *Exxon Valdez* grounded on a reef in Prince William Sound, Alaska and spilled 42 million liters of crude oil. At least 1900 km of shorelines in the area were contaminated. Marine mammals and seabirds that routinely use the sea surface were immediately affected. Mass mortality of 1000–3000 sea otters and an estimated 250,000 seabirds occurred in the first few days after the spill. Mass mortality also occurred among marine algae and invertebrates caused by both the oil itself and chemicals used in the immediate clean-up operation.



Map showing the location of the Exxon Valdez oil spill