

# The wreck of an oil tanker has been leaking for months in Philippine waters

Sentinel-1 CSAR IW acquired on 06 March 2023 at 21:47:35 UTC  
Sentinel-1 CSAR IW acquired on 18 March 2023 at 21:47:35 UTC

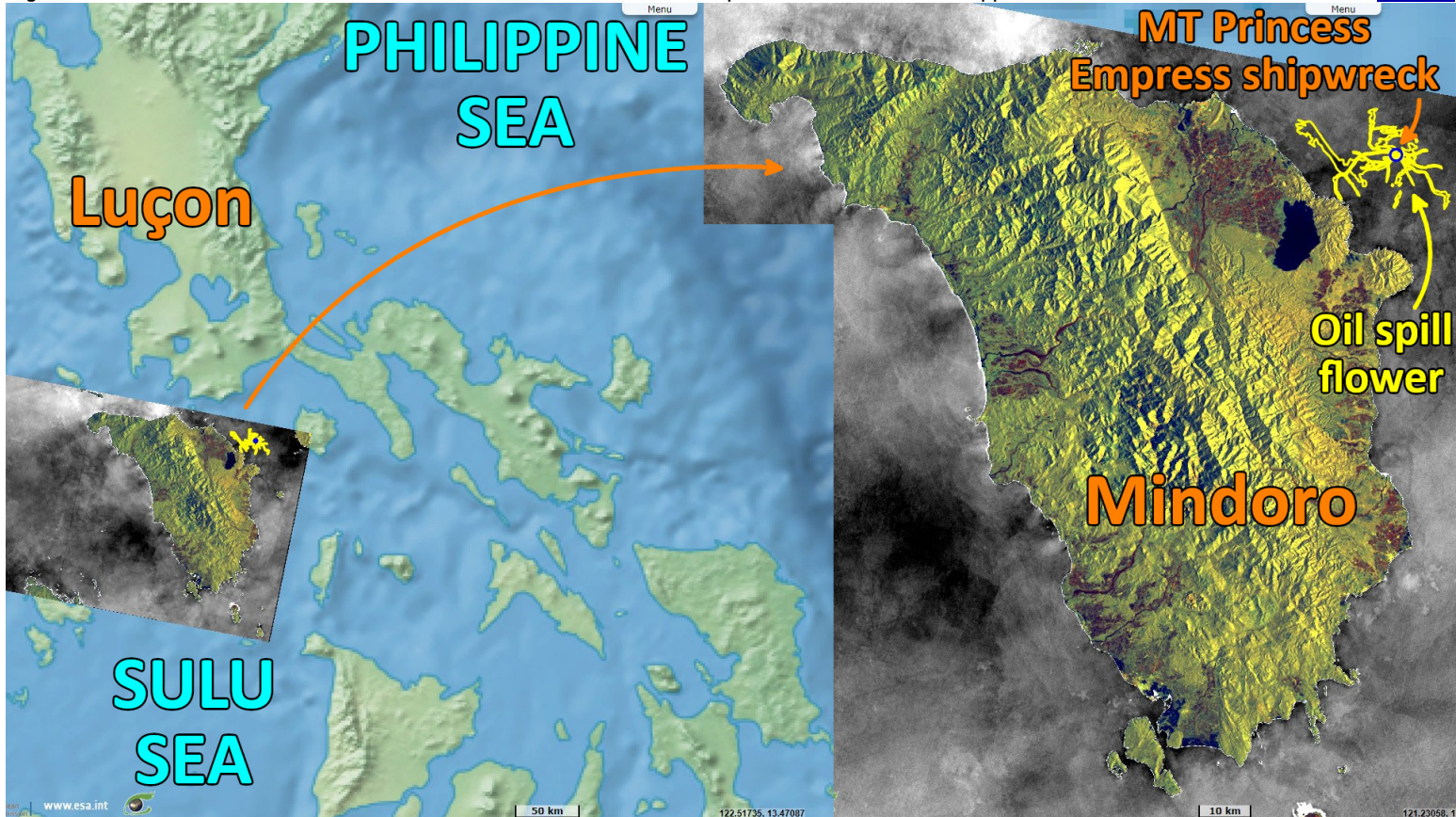
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Sentinel-1 CSAR IW acquired on 16 July 2023 at 21:47:41 UTC  
Sentinel-1 CSAR IW acquired on 28 July 2023 at 21:47:41 UTC

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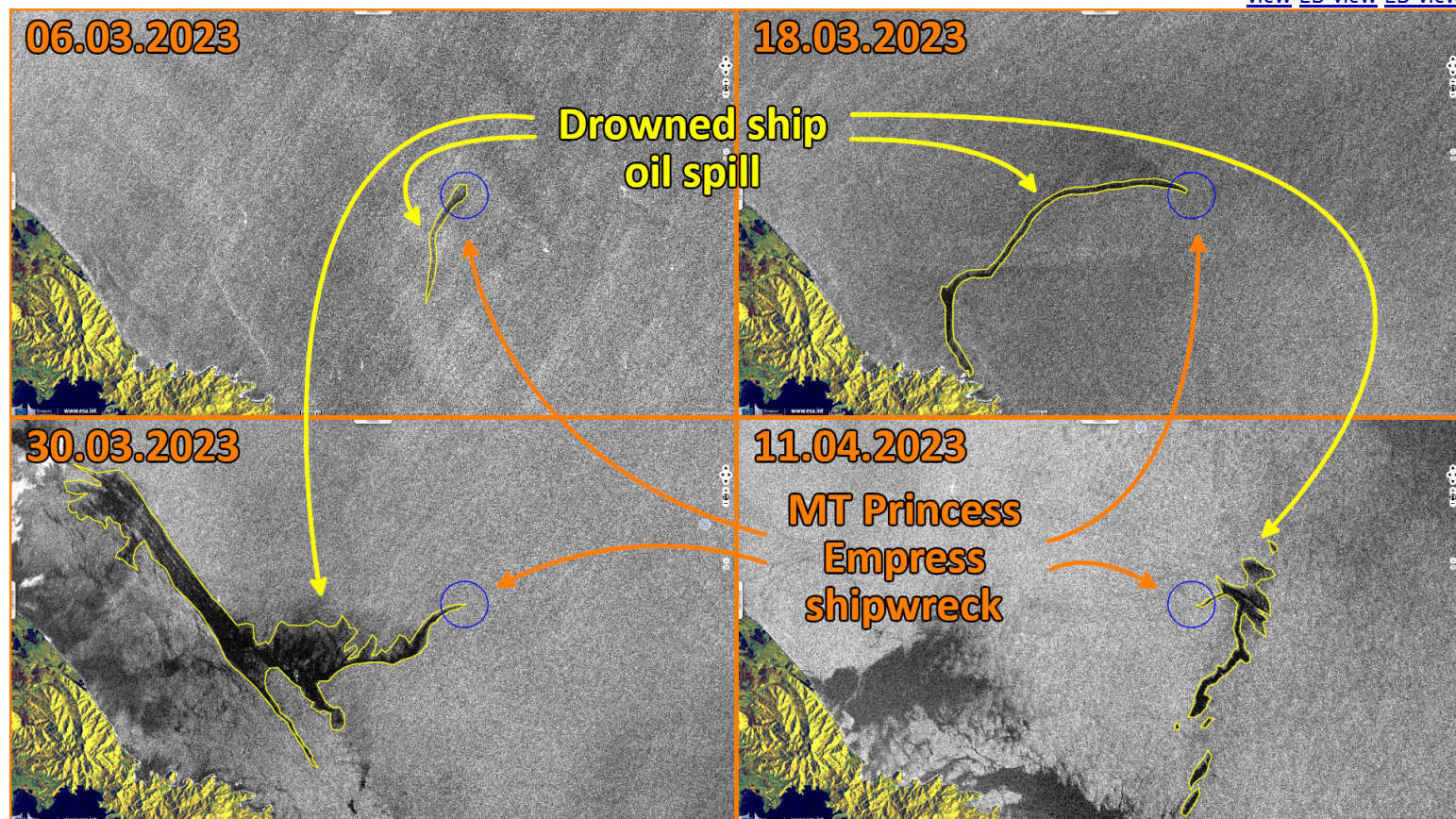
Fig. 1 - S1 (06.03.2023->28.07.2023) - A tanker called the MT Princess Empress has sunk in the Philippines water.



On February 28, the MT Princess Empress oil tanker was sailing without sending AIS signals following a common shipping route in the Philippines. It started to take on water and suffered engine trouble as the waves tossed it around in the waters off Oriental Mindoro, reports Kelly Franklin for SkyTruth. The captain and 19 crewmembers were rescued from the sinking tanker, which finally submerged about 14 km from shore.

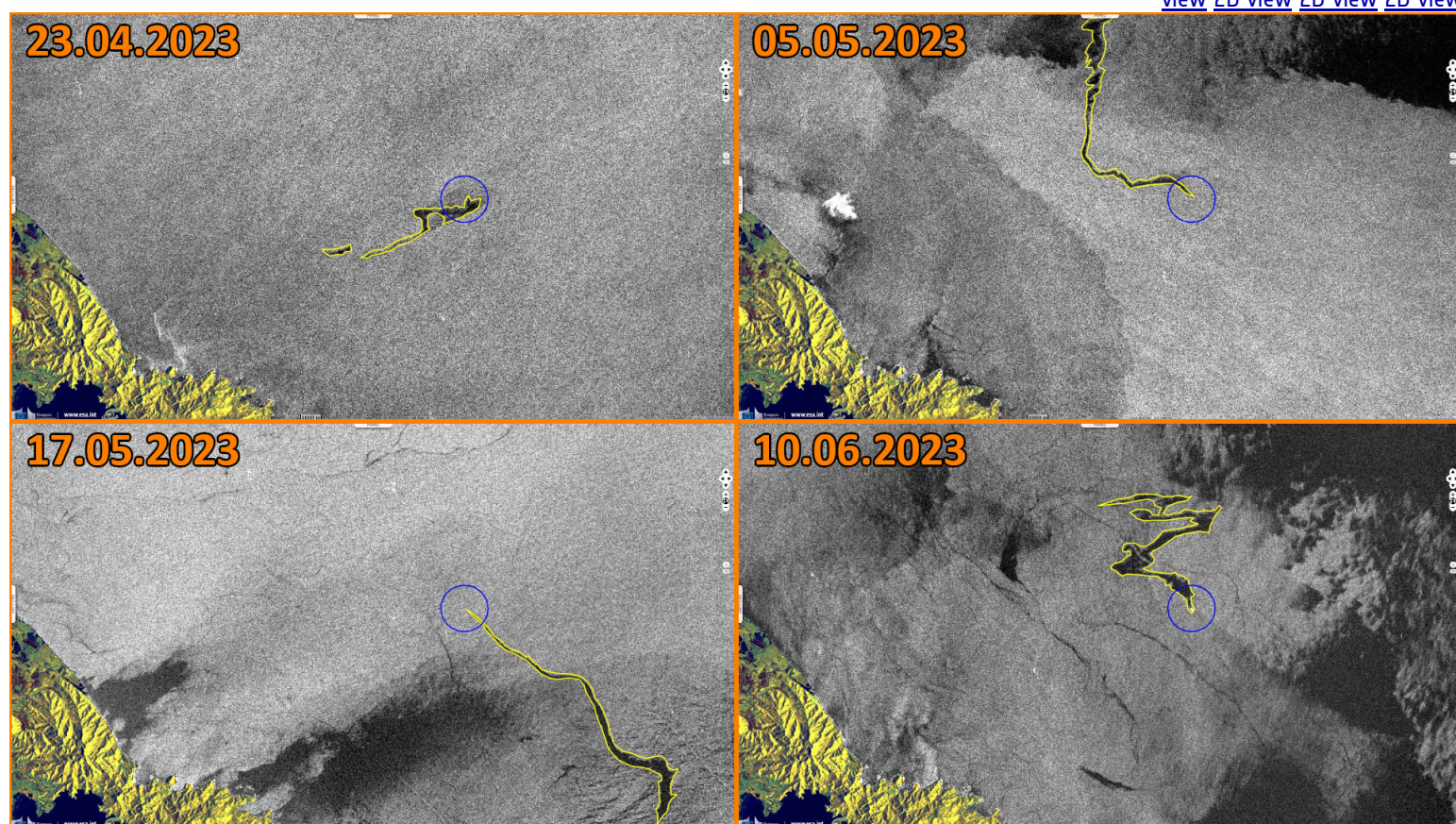


Fig. 2 - S1 [06.03.2023; 18.03.2023; 30.03.2023; 11.04.2023] - Since, its wreck has been leaking tens of thousands of litres of oil daily. [2D view](#) [2D view](#) [2D view](#) [2D view](#)



The tanker has been leaking for months. On the day that it sank, the tanker was transporting around 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil. In March, the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources estimated that 35,000-50,000 liters of oil were escaping the sunken vessel per day.

Fig. 3 - S1 [23.04.2023; 05.05.2023; 17.05.2023; 10.06.2023] - The ship owner and its insurance are unlikely to cover for the cost of the pollution. [2D view](#) [2D view](#) [2D view](#) [2D view](#)



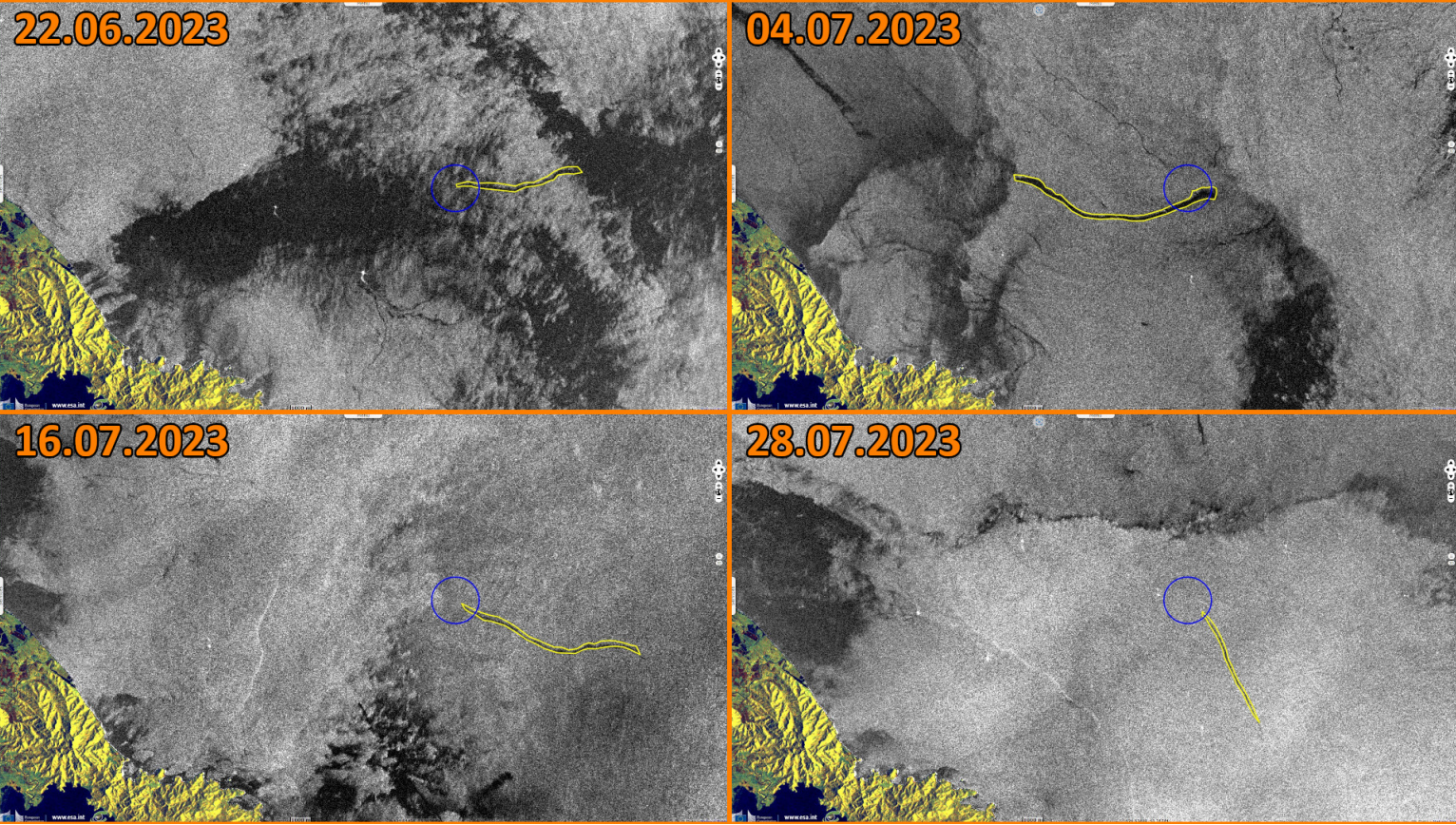
Cleanup requires immense financial resources, labor, and time, and despite best efforts often can't correct irreversible damage done to local flora and fauna.

As of August, the Philippine government has paid \$13 million in assistance to citizens in response to the Princess Empress oil spill but the damage to fisheries alone reached \$68.3 million.

The Philippine Department of the Environment and Natural Resources found that the affected habitat included 2251 hectares of coral, 1286 hectares of seagrass and 1647 hectares of mangrove forest. Of the affected locations, 26 were home to nesting sea turtles.



Fig. 4 - S1 [22.06.2023; 04.07.2023; 16.07.2023; 28.07.2023] - The law in the Philippines still has to evolve to avoid future disasters. [2D view](#) [2D view](#) [2D view](#) [2D view](#)



Since the Princess Empress sank, citizen-led initiatives have sought accountability and action in response to this environmental disaster. To date, no new legislation has been passed to protect the area from disastrous oil spills in the future, or to limit LNG development in the region.

*The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Space Agency or the European Union.  
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