



CTA-141-Red Tide-Florida Beaches

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Dead fish, sea turtles, manatees washing up on southwest Florida beaches in red tide explosion

By

- Shelby Lin Erdman, Cox Media Group National Content Desk

A red tide algae bloom is killing marine life in the waters off southwest Florida in unprecedented numbers.

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Dead fish, sea turtles, manatees, sea birds and even a shark have washed up on the beaches and clogged canals stretching from Tampa Bay to the Florida Keys this summer, [according to news reports](#) on the toxic bloom.

The [Miami Herald](#) described the unfolding disaster as “a red tide slaughterhouse.”

Every year, both Florida and Texas deal with red tides, but in Florida this has been the worst year since 2006, [the Miami Herald reported](#).

This is the red tide in Florida right now. They just released a bunch of overflow (lawn, sewer runoff, farm fertilizer and nitrogen) from Lake Okeechobee. it’s causing a large portion of marine life to die.

Please spread the word.

The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#), or NOAA, defines a red tide, or harmful algae bloom, as a rapid growth of microscopic algae that produces toxins, which can have a harmful or deadly effect on marine life, birds and even humans. “The blooms can also cause large fish kills and discolored water along the coast,” [NOAA officials said](#).

[The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) has documented almost 300 sea turtle deaths in the waters off southwest Florida since the bloom started last October, [according to The Associated Press](#).

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Veterinarian Dr. Heather Barron, from the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife, cares for a Loggerhead sea turtle that was found washed ashore after becoming sick in the red tide on August 1, 2018 in Sanibel, Florida. Dr.

Barron said, "this year's red tide is absolutely the worst she has seen for adult sea turtles,". (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

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The mayor of Sanibel, Florida, along the Gulf Coast said the tide was a result of a "perfect storm of coastal pollution and a hot Gulf ignited by flushing nutrient-laden water from Lake Okeechobee," [the Miami Herald reported](#).

"All they do is obviously fuel the red tide. So, it's a catalyst in making the problem worse," Mayor Kevin Ruane said.

Red tide season in Florida usually last from October to around February, but [has now lasted more than 10 months](#).

It's unclear how long the red tide conditions might persist and how many animals will die in the meantime.

Florida needs help. This is so horrible and it's not in any news outside of the areas effected. This has been going on since March and it's getting worse. Officials are ignoring pleas for help! [#RedTide #greenalgae #worstredtideever#LakeOkeechobee #deadfisheverywhere #Floridapic.twitter.com/RrqfiAf3en](#)

— Pam Cook (@PamCookHobbit) [August 1, 2018](#)

Just look at all the dead fish washing up on the Sanibel Causeway! Danielle Goetz sent us this shot. [#fish #wildlife#redtide #Florida #waterquality pic.twitter.com/ivHCaiBYKz](#)

— Channing Frampton (@ChanningWINK) [July 29, 2018](#)

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The massive [#RedTide](#) in [#Florida](#) is an environmental catastrophe on par with the [#BP](#) [#OilSpill](#)...[#ussugar](#)[#FortMyers](#)[#Sarasota](#)[#sanibel](#) [#Captive#Fla](#) should be ashamed [#everglades](#) pic.twitter.com/WMvjaV8v7p

— John Pilon (@jlpilon3) [August 2, 2018](#)

This is hardly on the local news and absent from the Nat'l news. This is happening in Florida. Toxic algae and red tide are killing marine life on both coasts. People made a lot of money by letting other people dump things in our water that they knew would do

this. [@FLGovScott](#) pic.twitter.com/VbzmuCrzjb

— Marji Hope (@nuggetmommy) [August 2, 2018](#)

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