



RED TIDE

TOP 10 RED TIDE FACTS

1. Harmful algal blooms (HABs), commonly referred to as red tide, occur worldwide and are caused by microscopic algae (single-celled, plant-like organisms).
2. At high concentrations (known as blooms), algae may discolor the water—sometimes red, green or brown.
3. In Florida, the term ‘red tide’ is used specifically to refer to marine HABs of *Karenia brevis* or *K. brevis* common in the Gulf of Mexico.
4. A bloom can last days, weeks or months, but its location can change daily due to wind conditions and water currents.
5. *K. brevis* is found almost exclusively in the Gulf of Mexico, but is occasionally transported to the U.S. east coast.
6. *K. brevis* produces toxins that can affect the nervous systems of fish, birds, mammals and other animals.
7. Toxins from blooms of *K. brevis* can irritate a person’s skin, eyes and throat. They can also affect the breathing of some people.
8. Seafood from grocery stores and restaurants comes from areas that are monitored and is safe to eat.
9. No single factor causes blooms of *K. brevis*. Blooms form as a result of interactions between the organisms (biology), natural or man-made sources of nutrients for growth (chemistry) and the currents that concentrate or move red tide (physics).
10. Up-to-date information on *K. brevis* blooms in Florida is provided by FWC and can be found online.

CURRENT STATUS

MyFWC.com/redtidestatus, or call 866-300-9399

Shellfish Harvesting Information:

FDACS.gov/SHAC or call 850-617-7600

Tracking/Forecasting Red Tide & Respiratory Irritation:

MyFWC.com/research/redtide/tools/

HUMAN HEALTH AND ADDITIONAL INFO

Florida Department of Health: floridahealth.gov

Florida Poison Control Information Center: 800-222-1222

Red Tide Facts: MyFWC.com/research/redtide/faq

REPORT FISH KILLS OR WILDLIFE IMPACTS TO FWC

Report Fish Kills: 800-636-0511, or use the FWC Reporter App

Report Wildlife Impacts: 888-404-FWCC (3922)



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HEALTH TIPS:

1. When winds are blowing *K. brevis* toxins onshore, people may experience throat, eye and nose irritation. If you experience irritation, leave the area and go indoors. People with severe asthma or chronic lung conditions should avoid areas with active red tide. If symptoms continue, seek medical attention.
2. Swimming in red tide can cause skin, throat and eye irritation. If your skin is easily irritated, avoid swimming during blooms. If you experience irritation, get out and thoroughly wash off with fresh water.
3. Swimming or fishing where there is an active fish kill is not recommended.
4. Pets may become ill if they swim in red tide blooms and then lick their fur. Do not allow them to eat fish or drink the water from areas where blooms are present.
5. Check the current status of red tide.

SEAFOOD SAFETY TIPS:

1. Commercial shellfish harvesting (clams, oysters, mussels) is closely regulated and monitored by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. If a shellfish harvest area is affected by red tide, it will be closed.
2. Seafood found in grocery stores, restaurants and other commercial outlets comes from areas that are monitored to ensure that these products are safe.
3. The fillets from healthy fish can be rinsed thoroughly with fresh water and eaten.
4. Recreational anglers and shellfish harvesters should exercise caution:
 - Other marine species may contain toxins.
 - Cooking or freezing seafood does not get rid of red tide toxins.
 - The muscles or the primary edible parts of other shellfish (crabs, shrimp, and lobsters) are not affected by red tide and can be eaten. Do not eat the tomalley (green stuff/hepatopancreas).
5. Harvesting distressed or dead animals is not advised under any circumstances. Fishing near distressed or dead fish is also not recommended.

