



MIAMI WATERKEEPER®

Background

On October 3, 2018, state and local officials confirmed that there are elevated levels of the algae linked to red tides off Florida's Atlantic coast. Officials closed several beaches and issued advisories in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. Florida's Atlantic coastal counties are working closely with those on the Gulf Coast, where a devastating red tide has been occurring for several months.

Red Tide Information

In Florida, red tide is caused a dinoflagellate algae, *Karenia brevis* (*K. brevis*), which is common in the Gulf of Mexico. In high concentrations, *K. brevis* can make waters appear red or brown.

Red tides produce toxic chemicals that affect both marine organisms and humans. These toxins can cause fish kills and can become airborne, causing human respiratory issues. Even low levels of the toxins can cause respiratory issues in sensitive individuals.

While red tides do occur naturally, nutrient pollution (from fertilizers, sewage leaks, septic tanks, and more) makes red tides more severe and longer-lasting. Blooms can last anywhere from several days to longer than a year.

Red tides on Florida's east coast are rare because conditions in the Atlantic are cooler than the Gulf of Mexico and have better circulation. However, they can occur on the Atlantic coast when currents transport *K. brevis* from the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic. Strong onshore winds can push the organisms close to shore where they can cause human health issues.

The best precautions you can take are to avoid areas where the organism is confirmed to be present, try not to touch the water or visit the beach, keep windows closed, and avoid seafood caught in areas with active blooms.

What is Miami Waterkeeper doing?

Miami Waterkeeper is working to reduce nutrient pollution that feeds algae blooms. We've written a proposed [fertilizer ordinance](#) for municipalities to reduce fertilizer runoff. This will help keep algae bloom from forming. Tell you local elected officials that you want them to take action on this! Our fact sheet also has other ideas for policy changes that will help keep our waters safe.

We are also monitoring beaches and the Bay weekly, and reporting testing data via our [Swim Guide App](#). Be sure to [report](#) illegal pollution, dumping, fish kills, or other issues to us!

Visit us at www.miamiwaterkeeper.org to learn more and follow us on social media: Facebook @miamiwaterkeeper | Instagram @miamiwaterkeeper | Twitter: @miamiwaterkpr

You can also [donate](#) to help keep our waters clean and [become a member](#) today!