

Algae bloom to be studied in Gulf of Maine

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A new program focused on the southern Gulf of Maine and adjacent New England shelf waters could aid managers of U.S. offshore shellfish beds.

The red tide observation and modeling program was developed by researchers at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and colleagues from seven other universities or agencies.

The five-year, \$7.5 million project is designed to aid policymakers in deciding whether to re-open, develop, and manage offshore shellfish beds that are presently closed due to the presence of red tide toxins.

Lead investigator Don Anderson of WHOI said the researchers hope to develop a full, regional-scale understanding of such blooms.

"We don't understand the linkages between bloom dynamics and toxicity in waters near shore versus the offshore, nor do we know how toxicity is delivered to the shellfish in those offshore waters," said Anderson. "An additional challenge is the need to expand modeling and forecasting capabilities to include the entire region, and to transition these tools to operational and management use."

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