

# International experts weigh-in on harmful algal blooms

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Cambridge, Md. - An international group of scientists is linking nutrient pollution in the world's coastal seas to an increase in the number of harmful algal blooms reported in recent years. When harmful algal blooms (HAB's) occur, they taint seafood with toxins, cause human respiratory and skin irritations and cause fish or mammal kills in coastal waters.

In the December edition of the journal *Harmful Algae*, scientists present a compilation of 21 articles outlining the role of nutrient pollution in the increasing frequency of these events.

"Harmful algal blooms can have direct effects on human health and the environmental balance of our coastal waters," said journal editor and University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science researcher Dr. Patricia Glibert. "By tapping the expertise of many of the world's leading voices on harmful algal blooms, this series of papers hopes to elevate this issue to the forefront of coastal management issues needing immediate attention."

The journal outlines several key issues driving the expansion of HAB's in the United States and the world.

- Degraded water quality from increased nutrient pollution promotes the development and persistence of many HABs;
- Understanding the complex relationships between nutrients and the

outbreak of harmful algae is key to reducing future blooms; and,

- New tools for monitoring and predicting these events can help us better understand HAB's.

Source: University of Maryland

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