

Sea turtle deaths spike in Florida waters with red tide

July 26 2018

Researchers are reporting a spiking number of sea turtle deaths in Florida waters plagued by a red tide algae bloom.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has documented 287 sea turtle deaths in Gulf of Mexico waters along the southwest Florida coast since the toxic [bloom](#) started in October.

Allen Foley of the commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute said Thursday that's about double the average number of turtle deaths in those waters every year.

The bloom sometimes stretches from Tampa Bay to the Florida Keys. Foley said [turtles](#) living in the area become sick and die when their food gets contaminated by the toxins.

Loggerhead and Kemp's ridley sea turtles are the two species primarily affected by the bloom. Both are federally protected turtles.

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Citation: Sea turtle deaths spike in Florida waters with red tide (2018, July 26) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-07-sea-turtle-deaths-spike-florida.html>

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