

Red tide uptick spurs respiratory warning at Florida beaches

July 23 2021



Tyler Tucker, left, and his father Toliver Tucker collect dead fish from nets into their shrimp boat while Jessica Toliver steers the trawler through the intracoastal waterway where Red Tide is decimating fish populations off Treasure Island, Fla., on Thursday, July 22, 2021. Credit: Douglas R. Clifford /Tampa Bay Times via AP

People may experience respiratory problems because of a persistent bloom of toxic red tide off Florida's Gulf Coast, the National Weather Service said Friday.

The service issued a "beach hazards statement" affecting the oceanfront and bayside shores in Pinellas County from 11:30 a.m. Friday through at least 10 p.m. Saturday. Symptoms include coughing, sneezing and watery eyes.

"People with asthma, emphysema or any chronic lung disease may be more sensitive," the NWS statement said. "Irritation may vary by beach and throughout the day."

Red tide occurs naturally in the Gulf of Mexico but can be made worse by the presence of nutrients such as nitrogen, which is often found in fertilizers.

Many experts suspect the red tide outbreak in the Tampa Bay area has been exacerbated by the release earlier this year of more than 200 million gallons (757 million liters) of contaminated water from an old phosphate operation in Manatee County.

More than 1,000 tons (1,000 metric tons) of dead marine life have been scooped up in Tampa Bay and nearby coastlines during the outbreak.

Local officials and [environmental groups](#) have called on Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis to declare a red tide emergency, but the governor insists adequate resources are in place to deal with the problem.



Dead fish are transported on Southbound, Jessica and Toliver Tucker's shrimp boat, on Thursday, July 22, 2021, where Red Tide is decimating fish populations off Treasure Island, Fla. Credit: Douglas R. Clifford /Tampa Bay Times via AP



Toliver Tucker, left, transports a payload of dead fish out of the intracoastal waterway with son, Tyler Tucker, 19, after capturing the fish using trawlers on Toliver's shrimp boat, Southbound, on Thursday, July 22, 2021, where Red Tide is decimating fish populations off Treasure Island, Fla. Credit: Douglas R. Clifford /Tampa Bay Times via AP



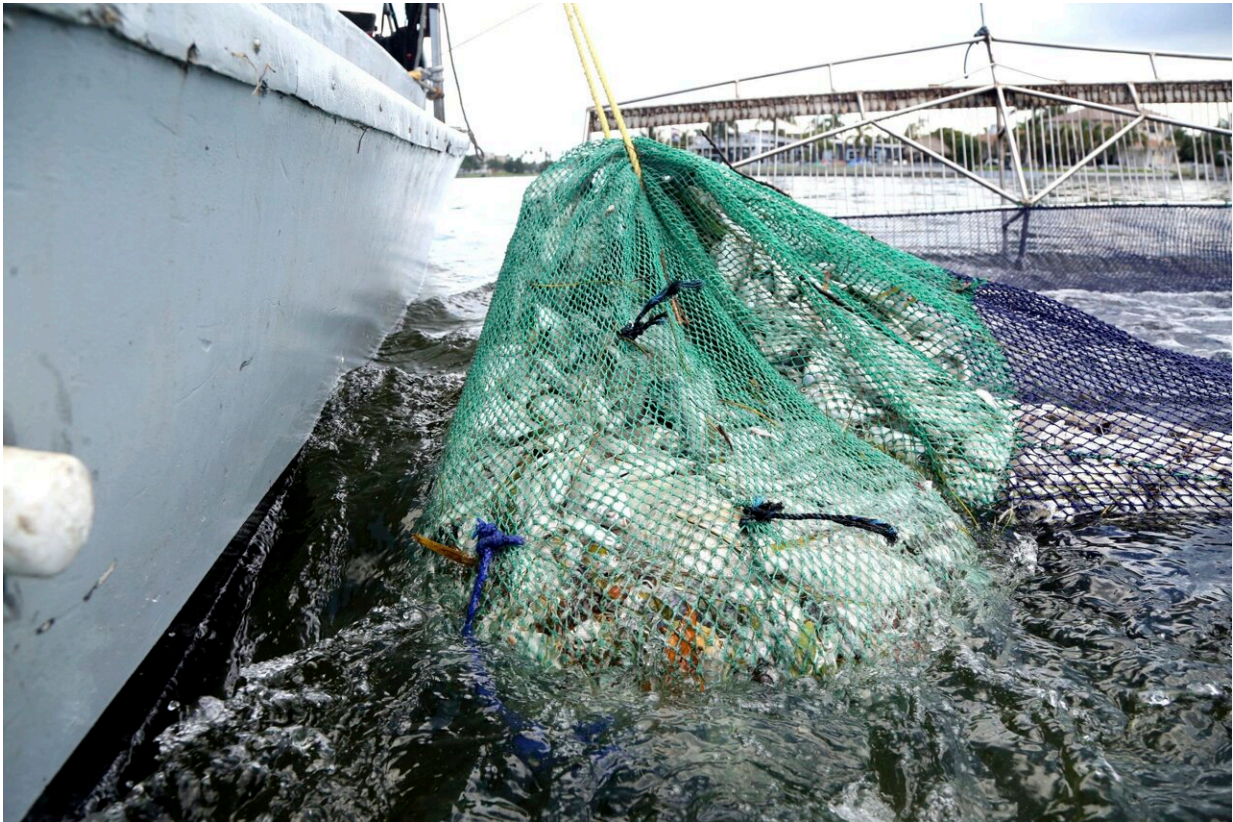
Toliver Tucker, left, works to prepare a bag of dead fish for offloading to a dumpster at St. Pete Beach with his son, Tyler Tucker, 19, right, after capturing the fish using trawlers on Toliver's shrimp boat, Southbound, on Thursday, July 22, 2021, where Red Tide is decimating fish populations off Treasure Island, Fla. Credit: Douglas R. Clifford /Tampa Bay Times via AP



St. Petersburg city employees clean up a fish kill from red tide along a St. Petersburg's waterfront park, on Thursday, July 8, 2021 at Bay Vista Park in St. Petersburg, Fla. A unusually large bloom of toxic red tide is being blamed for a massive fish kill in Florida's environmentally sensitive Tampa Bay. Credit: Arielle Bader/Tampa Bay Times via AP



Dead fish from red tide washed up along a St. Petersburg's waterfront park, on Thursday, July 9, 2021 at Bay Vista Park in St. Petersburg, Fla. A unusually large bloom of toxic red tide is being blamed for a massive fish kill in Florida's environmentally sensitive Tampa Bay. Credit: Arielle Bader/Tampa Bay Times via AP



A load of dead fish remain in nets after being captured by a trawler on Southbound, Jessica and Toliver Tucker's shrimp boat, on Thursday, July 22, 2021, where Red Tide is decimating fish populations off Treasure Island, Fla. Credit: Douglas R. Clifford /Tampa Bay Times via AP

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