

# Thousands of dead fish washed up on this Texas beach. What happened?

June 13 2023, by Lana Ferguson

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Thousands of dead fish were found laying on beaches in Quintana Beach County Park early Friday, leaving beachgoers alarmed and wondering what happened.

Within a few hours, Texas Parks and Wildlife officials determined low dissolved oxygen caused the massive number of fish deaths. Most of the fish that washed ashore were Gulf menhaden, officials said.

A Facebook page for the county park was updated throughout the weekend with photos and videos of the beach. One post detailed "the perfect storm to deplete the oxygen levels inshore" that caused the "fish kill."

The low dissolved oxygen levels occurred because of the combination of warm water, calm seas the past few weeks, and cloudy skies. Typically, cooler water can hold more oxygen, waves create more opportunities for the oxygen to enter the water, and sun drives photosynthesis in microscopic plants that create oxygen.

Authorities said there was no evidence of a chemical spill or release of any kind and [water samples](#) taken from the Intracoastal Canal and near the Brazos River locks contained almost no dissolved oxygen.

Officials warned people throughout the weekend that more fish would likely wash up. They advised people to avoid the beach altogether, if possible, or at the very least stay out of the water which would have higher bacteria levels.

By Sunday park officials said the beaches had been cleared with the exception of a "spattering off fish the machinery couldn't get. High tides over the next couple days should sift the rest down into the sand and bury them."

Quintana Park is south of Houston near Lake Jackson on the Texas coast, west of Galveston, in Brazoria County.

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