

Giant green algae slick heads towards China

22 June 2010



Chinese children play on a beach covered with algae in Qingdao in August last year. State media say a floating expanse of green algae covering 200 square kilometres (80 square miles) is heading towards China's east coast, threatening wildlife and the region's tourist industry.

A massive floating expanse of green algae is heading towards China's east coast, potentially threatening wildlife and the region's tourist industry, state media reported on Tuesday.

The algae bloom covered 200 square kilometres (80 square miles) and was about 13 kilometres (eight miles) offshore and floating towards the coastal city of Jiaonan in Shandong province, Xinhua news agency said.

The local branch of the State Oceanic Administration, which monitors marine conditions, is sending boats in a bid to clear the algae, it said.

[Algae blooms](#) are typically caused by pollution in China and suck up huge amounts of oxygen needed by marine wildlife to survive and leave a foul stench when they wash up on beaches, the report added.

In August 2008, a large offshore algae bloom threatened the sailing competition of the Olympic Games when it engulfed waters surrounding the event's venue in the eastern [China](#) city of Qingdao, near Jiaonan.

Up to 10,000 soldiers and volunteers were enlisted to clean up more than a million tonnes of the foul-smelling algae as they raced to clear the waters in time for the Olympics.

According to a 2008 State Oceanic Administration report, raw sewage and pollution from agricultural run-off has polluted 83 percent of China's [coastal waters](#), leading to algae pollution and other problems.

In 2008, China's coastal waters witnessed 68 red tides -- another type of [algae](#) bloom -- covering 13,700 square kilometres (5,500 square miles), an increase of more than 2,100 square kilometres over 2007, the report said.

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