



Hurricane Ian Turned Florida's Water So Vile That It "Looks Like Root Beer"



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AN "UNKNOWN GREEN SLUDGE" IS HAUNTING LOCAL RESIDENTS.

Green Sludge

Hurricane Ian may be gone, but it has left a big mark on Florida's environment, haunting residents.

According to [CBS News](#), there have been at least 20 reports of "environmentally hazardous issues" likely spurred by Hurricane Ian's landfall between September 28 and October 2.

Among the reports that *CBS* cites is the leaking of diesel, gasoline, and battery acid, a pipeline releasing 2,300 gallons of bleach, and an "unknown green sludge" causing respiratory issues in residential areas.

"In Sarasota Bay, normally this time of year the water is beautiful blue-green, gorgeous," Dave Tomasko, executive director of the [Sarasota Bay Estuary Program](#), told *CBS*. But after the storm? He says it "looks like root beer, smells like dead fish rolled into compost."

Stormy Stench

Further inland at the apartment complex where the sludge was first seen, the stench is reportedly so bad that it pervades even indoors, causing at least one resident to leave due to breathing problems.

But apparently, the EPA and other emergency authorities are too busy to help out.

"We've been crippled," Stanley Rupinski, president of the complex's homeowner's association, told *CBS* after trying to reach out to the relevant agencies. "And this is something that's really beyond our control. There's really nothing we can do as people to get this out of here."

Breathing Crisis

Scientists working on the ground, like Tomasko, were equally horrified by the ensuing runoff from Hurricane Ian.

As he collects water samples across Florida's coast, Tomasko worries that the already depleting oxygen levels in the bottom of layers of water could culminate in an "oxygen crash," like in the aftermath of Hurricane Charley in 2004, when there was no oxygen for "up to 100 miles upstream for about three months."

"And this is worse than Charley," Tomasko said. "We don't really know what this is gonna do."

"We don't know how resilient our systems are gonna be," he added.

More on Hurricane Ian: [ISS Astronaut Snaps Photo of Florida Draining After the Massive Hurricane Ian](#)

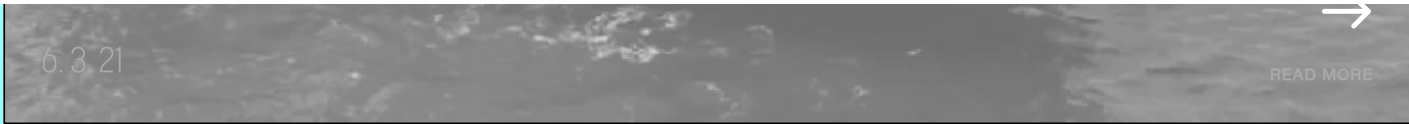
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