

# Elevated red tide levels detected at Sarasota County beaches after Hurricane Ian

By Regina Gonzalez | Published November 2, 2022 6:27PM | Sarasota County | FOX 13 News

## Red tide returns to some Sarasota beaches

Regina Gonzalez reports.

---

**VENICE, Fla.** - Public health officials in [Sarasota County](#) are once again warning the public of elevated [red tide](#) levels detected at local beaches.

The beaches with elevated levels of red tide include Venice Beach, Service Club Park, Venice Fishing Pier, Brohard Beach, and Caspersen Beach, Manasota Key and Blind Pass.

Some people may have mild and short-lived respiratory symptoms such as eye, nose and throat irritation like those associated with the common cold or seasonal sinus allergies.

## **[READ: Sarasota County continues cleanup one month after Hurricane Ian](#)**

Dr. David Tomasko with the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program said red tide occurs naturally in Florida this time of year, but nutrient pollution can feed its growth.

[Hurricane Ian](#) drained a lot of nutrients into near-shore waters.

"Hurricane Ian loaded a lot of nutrients into the near-shore Gulf of Mexico, which probably made this red tide even a bigger red tide, because it's got a lot more nutrients it can grow on," Tomasko said.

Florida Ocean conservationists like J.P. Brooker agreed.

## **MORE: Sarasota County continues cleanup one month after Hurricane Ian**

"Hurricane Ian was a major rainmaker," Brooker said. "It was a major nutrient input source for nitrogen and phosphorus and that nitrogen in particular is fueling a red tide event right here off the coast of Sarasota"

Stunning satellite images taken after the storm showed darker-colored water returning to the Gulf of Mexico as runoff, spanning across a 100-square-mile radius.

A photo then taken on November 1 shows areas in bright red as an algae bloom from Venice down to Boca Grande, down to offshore of Sanibel.

"It would be silly to think that there wouldn't be a link between that runoff and making this red tide worse than it would have been without the hurricane and without humans on the landscape," Tomasko said.

Tomasko said right now, it's hard to tell whether red tide will reach areas like Tampa Bay. Factors like current and wind would play a big role.

## **PREVIOUS: Study finds the public misunderstands 'cone of uncertainty'**

In addition to red tide levels, he also said since Ian, they've also seen high levels of bacteria in water around Charlotte and Sarasota counties.

Those levels have gone down in the last month, but he said he would still not advise wakeboarding or water-skiing in places like Lemon Bay, for the time being.

In recent years, research has shown that harmful algae events like red tide have played a detrimental role in the loss of Florida marine life.

"Manatees are dying, because they're starving to death," Brooker stressed.  
"They're starving to death because our water quality is compromised."

Researchers said there are a number of efforts humans can focus on to get nutrients that cause harmful algae events out of the water. These include simple things like not overfertilizing your lawns, picking up after your dog and not tossing grass clippings in your storm drains or gutters.