

- [Eat & Drink](#)
- [Arts & Culture](#)
- [Style & Shopping](#)
- [News & City Life](#)
- [Travel & Outdoors](#)
- [Health & Fitness](#)
- [Home & Real Estate](#)



1. 
2. [Travel & Outdoors](#)
3. [Outdoor Activities](#)
4. [High Levels of Red Tide Are Present at Many Sarasota Beaches. So Where Is It Safe to Go?](#)

Beach Update

High Levels of Red Tide Are Present at Many Sarasota Beaches. So Where Is It Safe to Go?

Dead fish, scratchy throats and unpleasant smells have been reported at Sarasota County beaches. Here's where it's safe to swim.

By [Isaac Eger](#) December 2, 2022





A past red tide event at a local beach.

IMAGE: JUDY BURNS

Red tide blooms in Sarasota are beginning to feel as seasonal as Christmastime. After Hurricane Ian, there were [concerns](#) that all the nutrient-laden water from out east would make its way into our bays and out toward our beaches.

Now those concerns have been realized.

The presence of high levels of the *Karena brevis* bacteria that causes fish kills and irritates the throats, noses and eyes of the public was first [reported](#) three weeks ago, and reports of dead fish along our white sand beaches are coming in daily.

The long-term health effects of red tide are still being studied, but whether you should go to the beach or not depends on a handful of factors. Some individuals are more sensitive to the presence of red tide than others. People with asthma or other respiratory issues might want to hold off going to the beach for now. If there are dead fish present in the water, do not go swimming, since that means there are elevated levels of bacteria present. It's not worth a quick dip!

Not all beaches are affected equally, though. Different levels of red tide are found throughout the area. While there are almost always red tide bacteria in the water, when the cell count per liter exceeds 1 million, a “high” level warning is issued. There are a handful of resources available that give daily updates about the water quality of Sarasota's beaches and whether any dead fish have been found. We'd recommend [the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Red Tide Current Status](#) and Mote Marine's [Beach Reporting System](#) for the latest information.

So if you are planning on going to the beach this weekend, where is it safe to go?

It's important to be aware that beach conditions can change hourly. The direction and strength of the wind and the tide all play into red tide levels. Sarasota Bay Estuary Program executive director Dave **Tomasko** writes in an email that “the water off Siesta Key [on Nov. 28] had dead fish and the greasy brown look of red tide (plus satellite imagery showed a massive bloom), but wind out of the east made it a nice day to sun yourself on the beach—even while the lifeguard stations warned people to stay out of the water due to the dead fish.” That means it may be worth it to just check out your favorite beach and see how it's doing.

What can be done to prevent the frequency and intensity of these red tide blooms? **Tomasko** says it is doable if we focus on mitigation and treatment.

“We have good local, national and international data that shows that we can improve water quality across scales of 50 to 350 square miles—about the same reach as the red tides we now have in the Gulf of Mexico,” **Tomasko** writes. “That's why upgrading our wastewater treatment systems (collection, treatment and disposal) and targeted stormwater retrofits and public education are our primary focus—because it works at the scale of the problems we're trying to solve.”

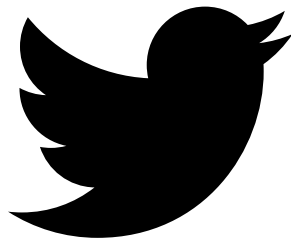
Filed under

[Red Tide](#), [Beaches](#)

Share



Share on Facebook



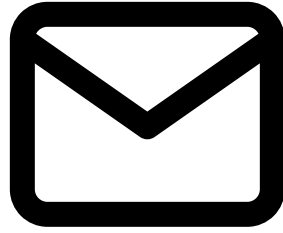
Share on Twitter



Share on LinkedIn



Share on Pinterest



Share via Email



Share on Reddit

Show Comments

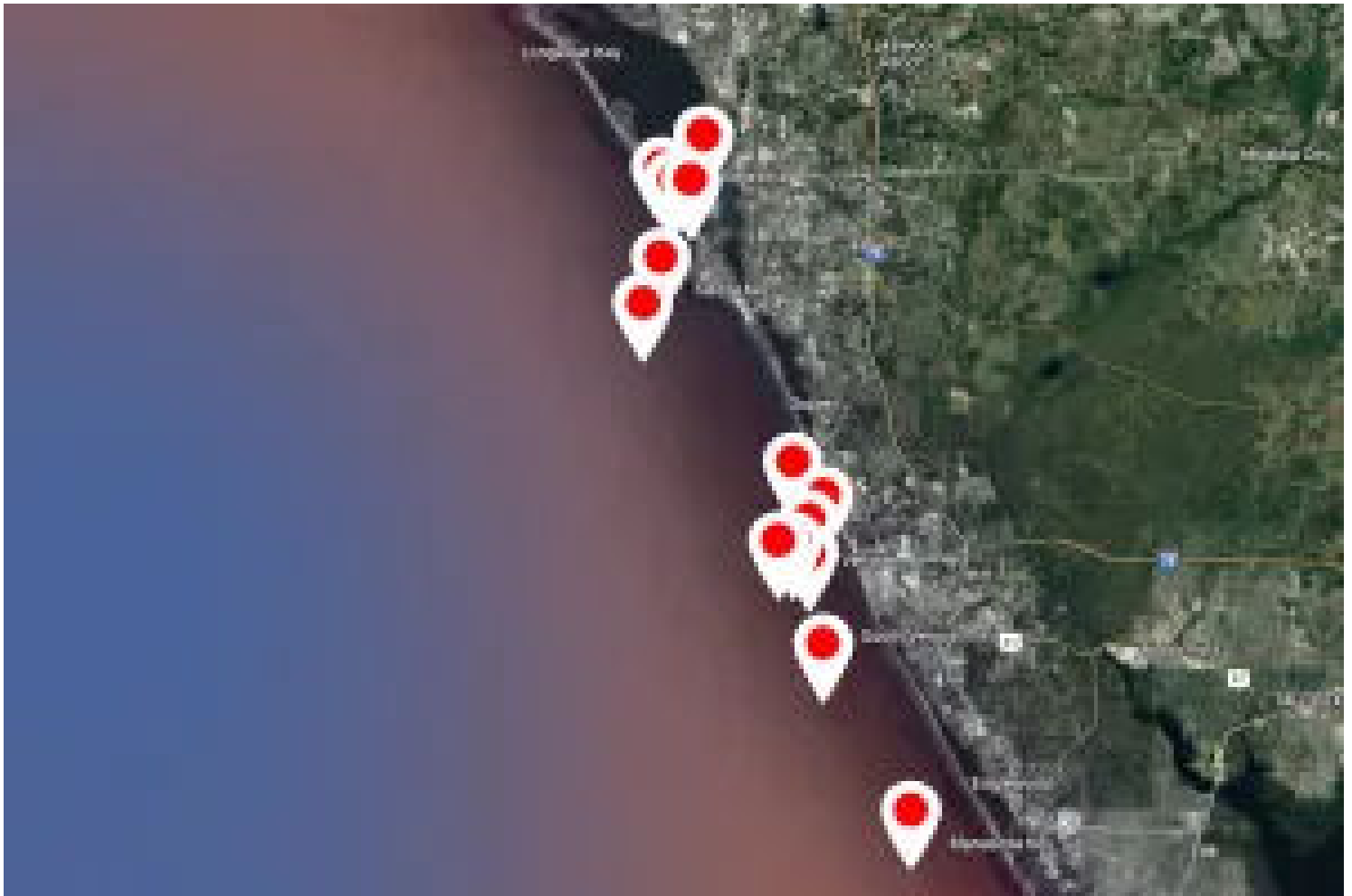
Related Content



IAN'S AFTERMATH

Has Hurricane Ian Created Another Red Tide Event?

10/13/2022 By [Isaac Eger](#)



BREAKING NEWS

Red Tide Is Now Present at Every Beach in Sarasota

11/10/2022 By [Isaac Eger](#)



SWIM ADVISORY

Where Is It Safe to Swim in Sarasota Right Now?

11/04/2022 By [Isaac Eger](#)



RED TIDE

Sarasota Health Department Reports Elevated Levels of Red Tide at Area Beaches—Again

11/01/2022 By [Megan McDonald](#)

Sarasota

1255 N. Gulfstream Avenue, Suite 101, Sarasota, FL 34236

Phone: (941) 487-1100



CHANNELS | [Eat & Drink](#) [Entertainment](#) [Fashion & Shopping](#) [Home & Real Estate](#) [News & Profiles](#) [News & City Life](#) [Health & Fitness](#) [Best of Sarasota](#)

ABOUT US | [Masthead](#) [Advertise](#) [Jobs](#) [Internships](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Contact Us](#)

SUBSCRIPTIONS | [Subscribe](#) [Renew Subscription](#) [Change Address](#) [Subscriber FAQ](#) [Purchase Back Issues](#) [Newsletters](#)

OTHER SAGACITY MEDIA | [Portland Monthly](#) [Seattle Met](#) [Houstonia](#) [Aspen Sojourner](#) [Vail-Beaver Creek Magazine](#) [Park City Magazine](#)

SAGA CITY MEDIA

© 2022 SagaCity Media