



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Callers Can Hear Updates on Statewide Conditions
Latest Red Tide Status Now Available by Phone

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION (6/30/06) – Florida residents and visitors can now call a toll-free number to hear the current red tide status report. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) established the new **red tide status line** earlier this year to provide the public an easy way to obtain the most up-to-date red tide status information in Florida.

Beachgoers, waterfront residents and boaters alike can call 1-866-300-9399 at anytime, from anywhere in Florida to hear a recording detailing red tide conditions throughout the state. Callers outside Florida can dial 727-552-2448 to hear the recording. Please note that standard calling charges will apply when dialing this number.

FWRI updates the recording each Friday by 5:00 p.m. after sampling efforts for the week have been completed and analyzed. The status line is not the only way beachgoers can make sure red tide doesn't prevent them from having fun in the sun. Web users can log on to <http://research.MyFWC.com> to find the latest [red tide status reports](#), which describe red tide severity and location, as well as learn more about red tide and the research conducted by FWRI.

FWRI coordinates a year-round statewide comprehensive red tide monitoring program. Scientists investigate and monitor Florida red tide and other harmful algal blooms in coastal and estuarine waters around the state. Researchers also study the causes of red tide and its effects on Florida's fish and wildlife resources. The Florida red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, produces a toxin that can kill marine life and affect humans.

The effects of red tide, such as dead fish and respiratory irritation in people, depend on the location and concentration of the red tide organism at a given time. Wind speed and direction of the wind are factors as well.

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Regional Red Tide Summaries (June 30):

East Region:No Event.

Northwest Region: No water samples were collected this week from northwest Florida. Samples collected last week detected a background concentration of *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide organism, 23 miles south of Pensacola Beach. Additional offshore samples from Escambia County as well as offshore samples from Levy County contained no *K. brevis*. Check with the [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Aquaculture](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding shellfish area closures.

Southwest Region: *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide organism, was detected this week at background to medium concentrations in the San Carlos Bay area of Lee County and at background concentrations 14 miles offshore of St. Pete Beach in Pinellas County. Although respiratory irritation and fish kills are possible in the areas of southern Sanibel Island and Ft. Myers Beach, no reports have been received. Discolored water is possible in southern Pinellas County due to a non-toxic diatom bloom in the area.

The FWRI Red Tide Status Line is now available to callers to hear a recording detailing red tide conditions throughout the state. FWRI updates the recording each Friday by 5 p.m. after sampling efforts for the week have been completed and analyzed. Red Tide Status Line: (866) 300-9399 (toll-free inside Florida only); (727) 552-2448 (outside Florida).

Pinellas County Health Department: Healthy Beaches Program

The Pinellas County Health Department's environmental engineering division monitors area Bay and Gulf waters and commercial pools for safe swimming factors. Our Healthy Beaches program monitors 14 beaches in Pinellas County. To see the bacterial sampling results from area beaches, visit www.doh.state.fl.us. Select "Beach Water Quality" from the drop-down menu, and then click on Pinellas County. An explanation of the sampling results is displayed, along with information on any advisories/warnings issued against swimming at a certain beach location.

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.
www.PinellasHealth.com