



Red Tide Offshore Monitoring Program

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FISH AND WILDLIFE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

St. Petersburg, Florida

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Volunteers Provide Invaluable Service

The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute's Red Tide Offshore Monitoring Program (RTOMP) was established in 2000. Its mission is to monitor and detect harmful algal blooms in Florida. Beyond that, the RTOMP's primary goals have been increased coverage of the Gulf of Mexico, early warning of offshore blooms, red tide event response, and to create partnerships with the marine community.

Receiving water samples from offshore allows for early detection of harmful algal species. Once the samples are returned to FWRI, they are examined under a microscope and species counts are taken. The results are



Volunteer locations throughout Florida as of October 2007.

reported and appropriate actions, such as closing shellfish harvesting areas, are taken. Finally, the data is archived into the Harmful Algal Bloom Historical Database for further study.

The Red Tide Offshore Monitoring Program relies on volunteers of all kinds - charter boat captains, commer-

cial fisherman, private citizens, divers, and more - along the Gulf of Mexico to collect water samples from offshore areas by boat. This map shows the locations of the volunteers as of October 2007.

The time they give to sampling and red tide event response is invaluable. Just this past year, in response to the occurrence of red tide in the northwest and southwest regions of the state, volunteers have collected over 400 water samples and spent a whopping 150 days collecting those samples. Thank you, Volunteers!

Volunteer Information Center Coming Soon



Volunteer Coordinator, Jesse, looking at a water sample under the microscope.

In February 2007, Jesse joined FWRI and the Red Tide Offshore Monitoring Program as the new Volunteer Coordinator. Over the past several months, she has been working on

bringing a new addition to the volunteer program - Volgistics. This is a web-hosted database system designed for recruiting, tracking, and coordinating volunteers. Because it is web based, Volgistics can be accessed from work, home, or on the road by the coordinator and the volunteers.

The best feature is that Volgistics allows for online interaction with the volunteers through the use of the Volunteer Information

Center (VIC). Each volunteer will have their own VIC page allowing them to view news, receive messages, view their service record, and more. Since the Red Tide Offshore Monitoring Program volunteers are located throughout the state, the addition of online interaction should prove invaluable. Volgistics is still in a trial period with the RTOMP as Jesse works on developing the database and online tools to meet the needs of the program.

Red Tide Offshore



Monitoring Program

Special points of interest:

- WHAT IS THE RED TIDE OFFSHORE MONITORING PROGRAM?
- VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE 150 DAYS OF SERVICE AND OVER 400 WATER SAMPLES!
- RED TIDE OFFSHORE MONITORING PROGRAM COMING ONLINE SOON!



Image of *Karenia brevis*—the cell responsible for Florida's red tide—taken with a Scanning Electron Microscope.



Volunteer Coordinator, Jesse, packing some sampling bottles to be shipped to a volunteer.

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The Red Tide Offshore Monitoring Program was established in 2000 to help provide invaluable assistance to researchers in the detection and monitoring of red tides in Florida waters. Thanks go out to all of our volunteers for their participation. To learn more about the program, our volunteers, and how you can help, please visit <http://research.myfwc.com/>.

We're on the web!

<http://research.myfwc.com/>

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Fish and Wildlife Research Institute Mission Statement:

Through effective research and technical knowledge, we provide timely information and guidance to protect, conserve, and manage Florida's fish and wildlife resources.