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NEWSROOM

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

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Increased red tide levels detected at Bird Key Park, near Ringling Causeway

The latest beach water samples collected Monday, Nov. 5, by the Sarasota County Health Department and analyzed by Mote Marine Laboratory for the micro-algae that causes Florida red tide (*Karenia brevis*) shows a marked increase at Bird Key Park, just west of the Ringling Causeway. Local health officials have placed signage in the area advising the public that red tide is present.

"We are fortunate that red tide has remained at low levels at other area Gulf beaches. People with asthma or chronic respiratory impairments may experience heightened symptoms associated with red tide when winds are blowing onshore, especially in the area around the Ringling Causeway," said Sarasota County Health Department Environmental Administrator Tom Higginbotham.

Since Bird Key Park is a "dog-beach," county health officials also are advising pet owners about the risks red tide poses to animals brought to the beach. Like people, pets can experience respiratory irritation from airborne red tide toxins and can become sick from ingesting them. When walking dogs along the shore, pet owners should not allow the dogs to play with any dead fish or foam that may accumulate during or after a red tide. If the pet swims in an area with red tide, wash it as soon as possible. Most dogs lick themselves after swimming, and will consume any toxins on their fur.

Beachgoers are encouraged to check the Mote Beach Conditions Report before they go to the beach because conditions can change daily. The Mote Marine Laboratory's Beach Conditions Report is updated at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily. Reports can be viewed online at www.mote.org/beaches. Residents and visitors can also register to receive email reports about specific beaches. For telephone updates, call 941-BEACHES and press 1 for Sarasota County beaches.

Additional resources for beach condition information include:

- Report Fish Kills: 800-636-0511
- Red Tide Information and Status Reports: www.MyFWC.com/Research
- Red Tide Facts: www.START1.org (Solutions to Avoid Red Tide, Inc.)
- Health Concerns related to red tide: 941-861-5000 or the 24/7 Florida Poison Control Information Center: 1-800-222-1222 or www.sarasotahealth.org or the Florida Department of Health Aquatic Toxins website: <http://www.myfloridaeh.com/medicine/aquatic/index.html>
- Current Beach Conditions: www.mote.org/beaches or call 941-BEACHES (232-2437)

