

# Facts about Red Tide

## What is Red Tide?

Red Tide is a type of algae (*Karenia brevis*) that is always present in nature, yet only the perfect conditions allow them to reproduce or “bloom” a side effect of which is a toxin. Blooms can occur for a variety of reasons including changes in rainfall, temperature, salinity or nutrient levels. Red Tide has been around for many years and the Texas coasts always fully recover from these naturally occurring blooms.



## Where is the Red Tide?

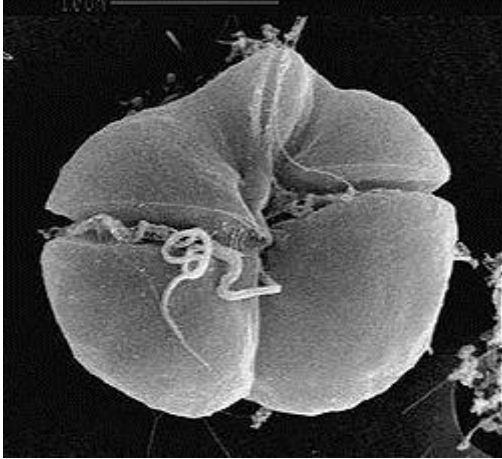
The location of Red Tide is constantly changing. An area where there is a bloom in the morning may not have a bloom in the afternoon. The wind and currents also affect red tide so there are many factors to consider. There may be blooms on one beach access, and not at the next beach access. It is impossible to know where the blooms will occur at all times.

## How Long Will it be here?

‘Tis the season for Red Tide (August through December). That being said, Red Tide can bloom in one area of the water in a very isolated patch, for as briefly as a few minutes, or last for several hours if not longer. It is almost impossible to predict where it may be or how long the bloom might last. The best thing you can do is not let the Red Tide ruin your day! Just head to the beach like normal, and then if you feel any irritation move to another area of the beach where you feel more comfortable.

## Should I be Worried?

For most people Red Tide only occasionally acts as an eye, nose and throat irritant. *K. brevis* produces neurotoxins which can cause illness or death, typically only affecting lower level animals such as fish, birds, and small mammals. Use your best judgement, if you feel any irritation, move to a different area of the beach. Often times one can simply move upwind of where that specific bloom is. There are often miles of beach that remain unaffected by the Red Tide. However, unless you are immunocompromised, elderly, or very young, you will most likely feel very little irritation if any.



### **Should I Cancel my Vacation?**

No. There is so much to do here at South Padre Island it would be a shame to cancel plans over something that can change at any time, and is impossible to predict. The best advice would be to go ahead with things as scheduled, then if you arrive and feel any effects, just head to a different part of the beach where you feel better, or enjoy many of the other unique activities that you can only find at South Padre Island. Activities can include visiting Sea Turtle Inc., the South Padre Island Birding Center, checking out our many restaurants, shopping, and other sightseeing locations.

### **Is it Okay to Bring My Pets to the Beach?**

Yes! Just be mindful of them. Do not let pets eat dead fish, drink the water, or eat sand that may be affected by the Red Tide. Take your pets inside or to a different area of the beach if they seem irritated (are coughing, wheezing, or having similar reactions). Also, do not take already sick or very old or young pets to areas of the beach where you feel irritation, treat them as you would treat yourself.

### **What is being Done About it?**

Here at SPI, our maintenance staff is working hard to ensure that dead fish and other debris are removed every morning in order to keep our beaches in pristine condition. Fish die offs can occur at any time of the day, however rest assured our staff is doing all they can to manage this issue. There is an operator working to confirm that dead fish are fully buried beneath the dunes in order to reduce odor and keep our beaches safe.

### **Where Can I Find Out More?**

For the most up to date reports about locations and intensity levels of Red Tide, visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife website or call the toll free line 800-792-1112, press 4 for fishing, then 9 for more red tide information.