

MEMORANDUM

To: USACE Colonel Jason A. Kirk, LTC Jennifer A. Reynolds, Richard McMillen, Kim Taplin, SFWMD Governing Board, Executive Director Ernie Marks, Terrie Bates, Susan Gray, DEP Secretary Noah Valenstein

From: Periodic Scientists Conference Call Participants
 Paul Tritaik - J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex
 James Evans & Holly Milbrandt - City of Sanibel
 Keith Kibbey & Lesli Haynes - Lee County
 Rae Burns – Town of Fort Myers Beach
 Harry Phillips – City of Cape Coral
 Rae Ann Wessel & Rick Bartleson, Ph.D.-Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation

Subject: Caloosahatchee & Estuary Condition Report

Reporting Period: **May 1 - 7, 2018**

This report provides a scientific assessment of Caloosahatchee River and Estuary conditions and how these conditions affect the health, productivity and function of the system.

Caloosahatchee Condition Summary: Average flows of **905 cfs** the past week reduced salinity at Fort Myers demonstrating the level of freshwater flow needed to manage salinities below the harm threshold of **10 psu**. Dry conditions and lack of rainfall makes the Caloosahatchee estuary **dependant on freshwater flows from Lake Okeechobee**. **The past 69 consecutive days the 30 day moving average salinity has exceeded the MFL resulting in harmful high salinities for oysters in the lower estuary and tape grass in the upper estuary**. Red tide continues to impact birds, sea turtles and cause fish kills and respiratory irritation along coastal beaches.

USACE Action: Since 1/12/18 the Army Corps has continued flows from Lake Okeechobee through pulse releases with an average target flow for the Caloosahatchee Estuary of **650 cfs** at S-79 and no releases to the St Lucie at S-80.

Recommendation: Continue to provide adequate water discharges from the Lake to benefit recovery of both the Lake Okeechobee marsh and assist habitat recovery and reduce harmful salinities throughout the Caloosahatchee estuary. There is sufficient water in the lake to achieve this and meet consumptive uses.

Lake Okeechobee Level: **12.96 ft. (Base Flow Sub-Band)**

Last week: **13.16 ft**

Lake Okeechobee Inflow: **444 cfs**

Lake Okeechobee Outflow: **698 cfs**

Weekly Rainfall: WP Franklin **0.09"** Ortona **0.48"**

Moore Haven **0.72"**

Salinity Beautiful Island: **2.2 - 4.2 psu (SCCF RECON Marker 18)**

Previous week **2.6 - 4.8 psu**

Salinity Fort Myers: **11 - 19 psu (SCCF RECON)**

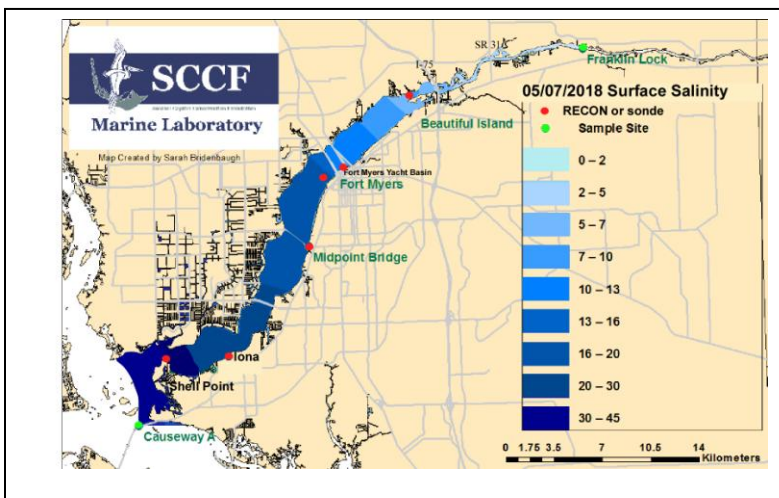
Previous week **11 - 17 psu**

MFL Status: Exceedance = 69 days 30 day moving average: 11.3 psu

Previous week: **11.9 psu**

Salinity Shell Point: **23 - 35 psu (SCCF RECON)**

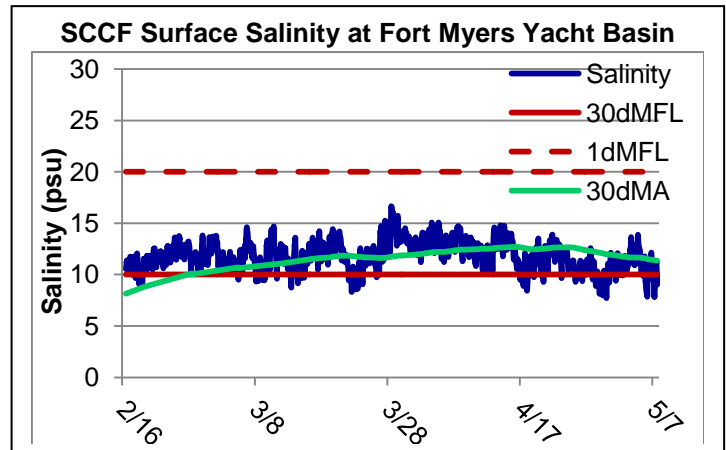
Previous week **24 - 35 psu**



Salinity (psu)			
	Current Value	Sustainable Range	High/Low
Beautiful Is	2.2 - 4.2	< 5 psu	In Range
Fort Myers	11 - 19	<10 psu	High
Shell Point	23 - 35	25 - 32 psu	High
Light (25% I _z depth meters)			
Fort Myers	0.94	1 meter	Low
Shell Point	1.69	2.2 meters	Low
Causeway	2.33	2.2 meters	In Range

Flow & Water Quality: Flows to the Caloosahatchee Estuary at S-79 during the past seven days averaged **905 cfs**. Over the past 14 days **58,740 AF** of water was discharged from Lake O, **54% to S-77**, **12% to S-308**, **31% of water from Lake O was discharged south to the EAA**. A net outflow of **1.7%** was discharged to the **L8** and a net **1.4%** was discharged through S-310.

ACOE Daily Reports			
Date	S79 Flow (cfs)	S78 Flow (cfs)	S77 Flow (cfs)
5/1/2018	890	1217	581
5/2/2018	661	1247	741
5/3/2018	101	1189	766
5/4/2018	1150	1233	626
5/5/2018	1681	1372	663
5/6/2018	1158	1370	582
5/7/2018	695	817	328
7 day Avg	905	1206	612



Upstream of S-79/Franklin Conditions: Sampling by Lee County Environmental Lab on 5/7/18 reported accumulation of 4 cyanobacteria species on the upstream side of S-79: *Microcystis*, *Dolichospermum*, *Aphanizomenon* and *Planktothrix*. On 5/8/18 the Olga Water Treatment plant reported chlorides of **58 mg/l**, apparent color **92 CU** and turbidity **4.21 NTU**. No visible algae reported at the plant intake the past week. The plant remains off line for maintenance.

Upper Estuary Conditions: The 30 day moving average salinity at the Fort Myers Yacht Basin was **11.3 psu** and the weekly average salinity was **11 psu**. These salinities are above the suitable range for tape grass, which is growing between the Caloosahatchee Bridge and Beautiful Island. Water column chlorophyll was elevated at Beautiful Island with *Skeletonema* and estuarine cyanobacteria the dominant taxa.

Lower Estuary Conditions: The average salinity at Shell Point, **31 psu**, was above the optimal range for oysters.

J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR:

Monitor Site	Salinity (psu)	Diss O ₂ (mg/L)	FDOM (qsde)	Chlorophyll (µg/L)
McIntyre Creek	32.8 – 35.8	4.1 – 13.4	10.4 – 16.3	1.3 – 202.5
Wulfert Flats	29.6 – 36.9	2.9 – 7.7	-----	4.8 – 55.8
Wildlife Drive	36.3 – 39.4	0.4 – 12.3	-----	0.9 – 8.7

Beach Conditions: The past week macroalgae was reported in the wrack line and in the swash zone along beaches on Sanibel and Fort Myers Beaches.

Red Tide: On 5/4/18 the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission reports that the Florida red tide organism, *Karenia brevis* persists in Charlotte, Lee and Collier Counties with **background to high concentrations along or offshore Lee and Collier Counties**. Numerous fish kills and respiratory irritation were reported the past week. A water sample SCCF collected at the Causeway on 5/7/18 contained medium concentrations of *Karenia*.

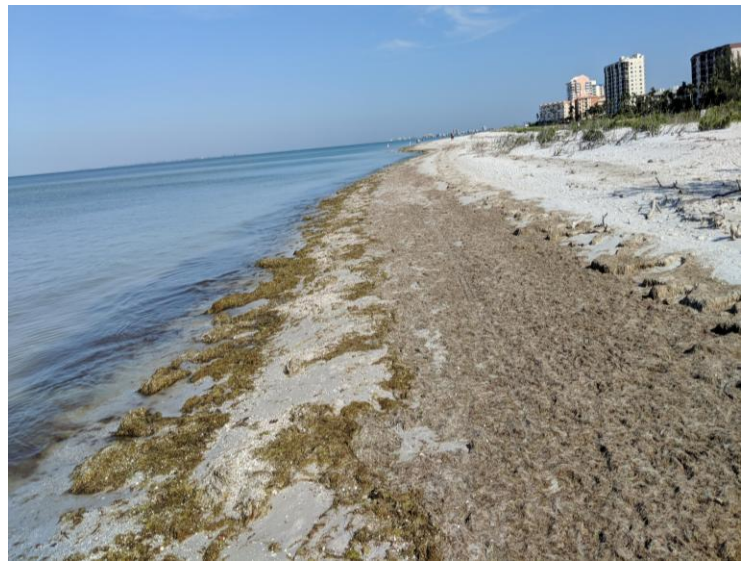
Wildlife Impacts: The past week, CROW, the wildlife hospital on Sanibel, treated **8 new patients with red tide symptoms**; **3 Double Crested Cormorants**, **2 Brown pelicans**, **1 Ruddy Turnstone**, **1 Herring Gull** and **1 Sanderling**. SCCF reported a dead sub adult Loggerhead sea turtle stranded near Sanibel's Lighthouse Beach and a juvenile green sea turtle was taken to CROW for treatment.

Caloosahatchee Stations	Chlorophyll (µg/L)	fDOM (qse)	Turbidity (NTU)	25% lo depth (meters)
Target Values	< 11	CE <70 SCB <11	CE < 18 SCB < 5	CE = 1 m SCB = 2.2m
Fort Myers	8.8	148	3.1	0.94
Shell Point	3.8	55.2	1.7	1.69
Causeway	4.0	14.2	2.3	2.33

Target light penetration: **CE**- Caloosahatchee Estuary =1 m
SCB-San Carlos Bay = 2.2 meters
 Definition of 25% lz: z where I is 25% of surface I.
 I = irradiance, z= depth



**Drift algae in the swash zone and washing up along Sanibel's West Gulf Beaches, 5/6/2018.
Photo City of Sanibel**



**Macroalgae in the swash zone and washing up along Fort Myers Beaches Critical Wildlife Area, 5/2/18.
Photos Town of Fort Myers Beach**