



## SCCF FAQ on Recent Water Quality and Sea Turtle Issues

***If you encounter a struggling or dead sea turtle, please call our Sea Turtle Hotline at 978-728-3663.***

### **Q: What is red tide?**

A: Red tide is caused by an explosive growth of a microscopic organism (a dinoflagellate), called *Karina brevis*. These algae blooms can produce toxin that can affect the nervous system of humans and wildlife.

You can see a map of [current red tide locations here](#).

### **Q: Does red tide occur naturally?**

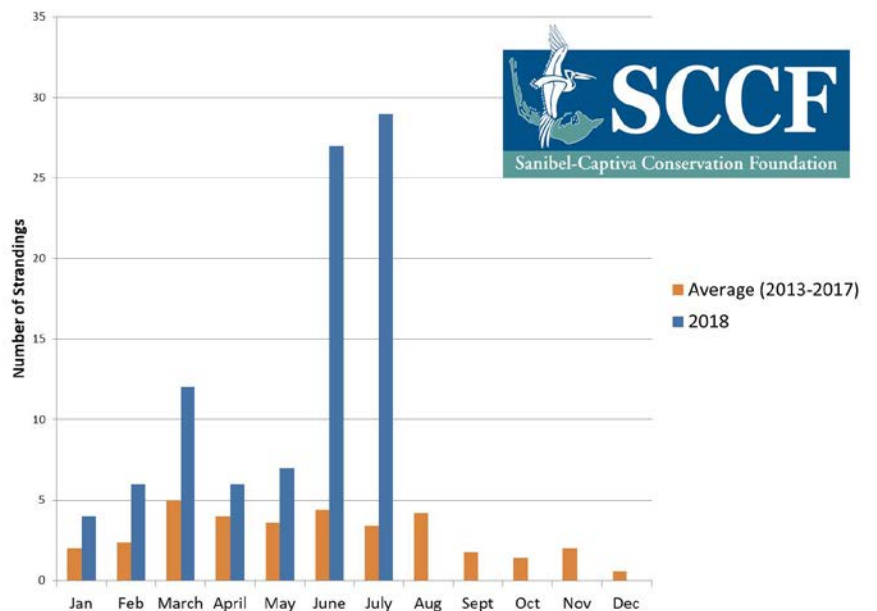
A: Yes, red tide does occur naturally; however, due to human induced water quality conditions, we are experiencing an unusually long duration of this bloom.

### **Q: How long has this been going on?**

A: We have reports of red tide since October, 2017. Onshore winds have also contributed to the bloom's presence on Sanibel and Captiva.

### **Q: When did the spike in sea turtle strandings start happening?**

A: Since the bloom began in October, the SCCF Sea Turtle Program has seen a marked increase in strandings. We usually see around 30 in a season; however, weeks we've responded to over 90 sea turtle strandings so far.



**Q: What does SCCF do when encountering red tide affected turtles?**

A: Once we receive a call on our Sea Turtle Hotline, our staff and interns respond.

If the sea turtle is dead, measurements are taken and reported to the national database. We also take to take blood samples to see if they are poisoned with brevetoxins.

If the sea turtle is alive, he/she is taken to the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife on Sanibel.

We have noticed female sea turtles exhibiting abnormal nesting behavior, and just received a permit from Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to do testing to see if they are poisoned with brevetoxins, which should yield interest research.

**Q: What species are being impacted by this?**

A: Primarily adult Loggerheads and Kemp's ridley sea turtles are being impacted.

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