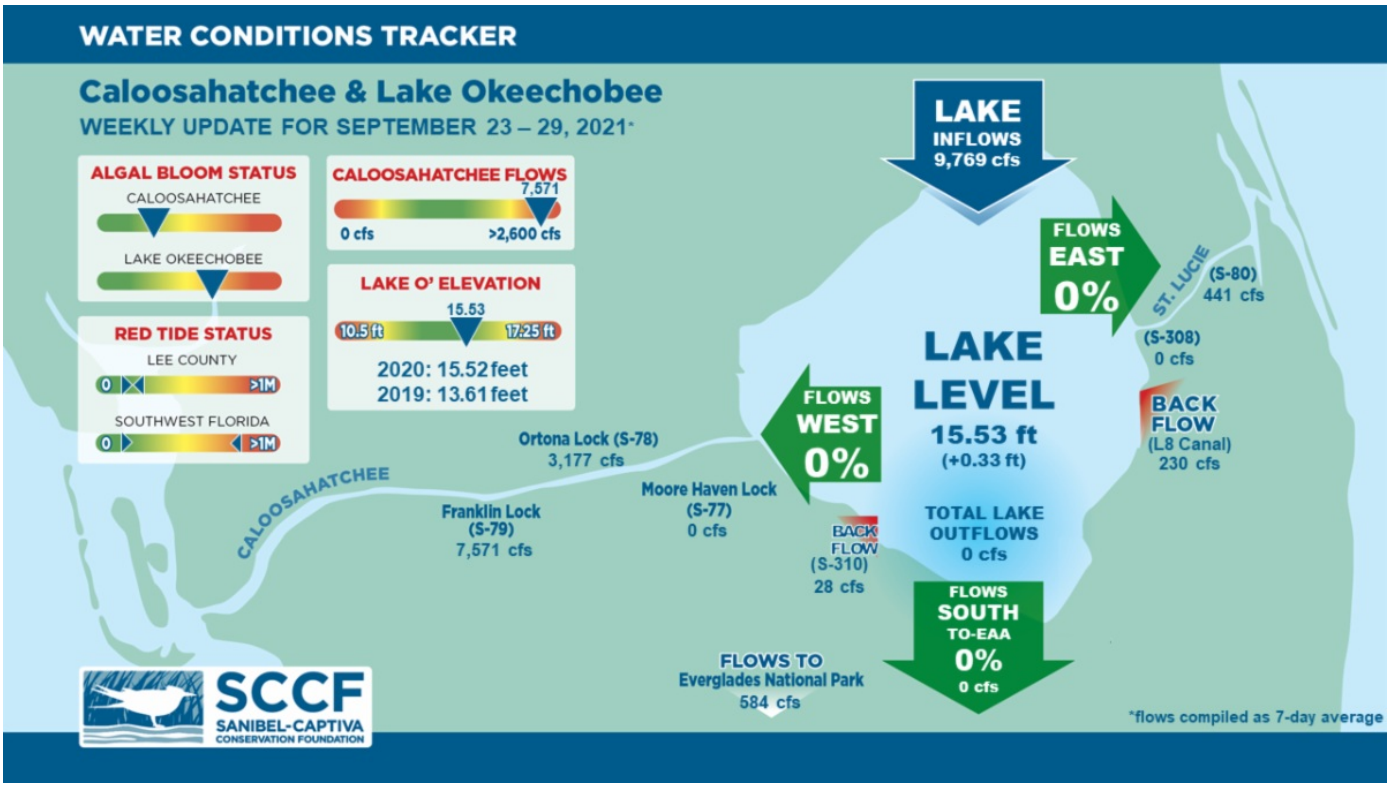
This Week's Water Conditions Update

October 01, 2021

Water Conditions Tracker



Lake Okeechobee Levels & Caloosahatchee Flow Impacts

On 9/29/21 Lake Okeechobee was at 15.53 feet (+0.33 feet in the past week). The average volume of water reaching the Caloosahatchee from the watershed increased to 7,571 cfs (cubic feet per second) this week. The 14-day average flow on 9/29/21 was 6,857 cfs and has been in the **damaging flow envelope** for 13 days. We are still not receiving any flows from Lake Okeechobee. Damaging flows from S-79 for prolonged

periods can have negative impacts to seagrass and oysters, which are important indicator species in the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

For more information on Lake Okeechobee and estuary conditions go to the latest **Caloosahatchee Conditions Report**

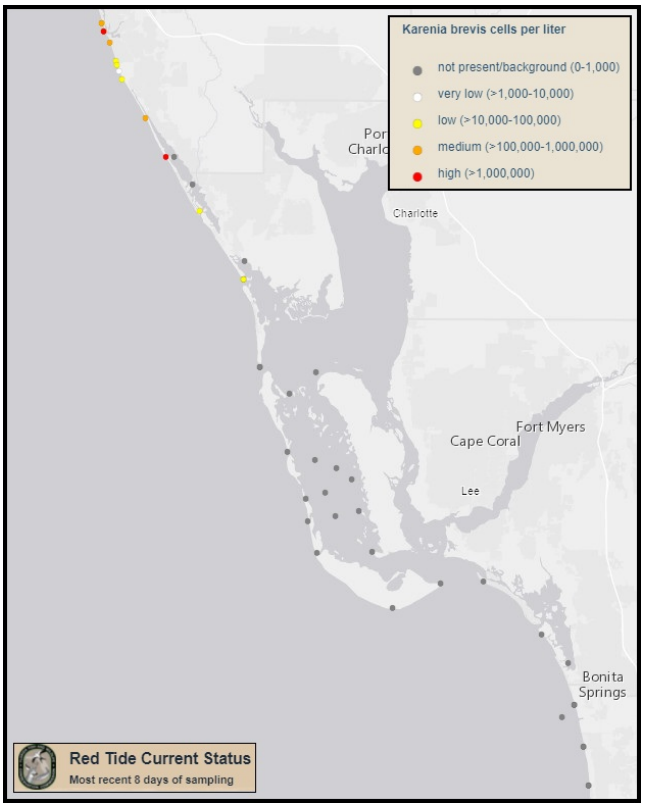
Virtual Water Quality Tour from Lighthouse Beach

Click here or on the image above to take a virtual tour from above Lighthouse Beach Park to see how the water looked this week.

With no flows from Lake Okeechobee, water clarity and quality is only being affected by the watershed and stormwater runoff from rain.

Weather Conditions: Drier Weather Ahead

Rainfall is not expected in the western portion of South Florida this week, with total weekly rainfall across the entire South Florida Water Management District forecast to be below average. This interruption in wet season rain patterns could be a signal that it is the start of the dry season. It is not possible at the moment to make definitive statements about the end of the wet season due to the possibility of a frontal system in the region during the second week of October. There is a 70-80% chance of La Niña conditions this winter, which generally means drier weather will be expected in the Southeast US.



Red Tide

Satellite imagery over the past week has shown medium to high levels of chlorophyll off the coast of Southwest Florida, with high chlorophyll patches off the coast of Cayo Costa, Boca Grande, and Charlotte County. *Karenia brevis* and/or other algal species may be contributing to the high chlorophyll concentrations.

In Lee County, FWC reported not present/background levels of *Karenia brevis* in all samples in the past week in Estero Bay and Pine Island Sound. The Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) on Sanibel received 4 patients with toxicosis symptoms (from red tide or blue-green algae) from 9/21/21 - 9/27/21.

The FWC fish kill hotline continues to receive reports of red tide related fish kills along the Gulf coast from Pinellas, Sarasota, Dixie, Charlotte, and Lee counties.

Blue-Green Algae

No cyanobacteria was present in the Caloosahatchee over the past week. On 9/27/21 algal blooms covered about 220 square miles of Lake Okeechobee. There is presently a 55% bloom-potential on Lake Okeechobee based on the most recent satellite imagery.

Resources To Follow:

To learn more about our current water conditions, click on the following links:

Caloosahatchee Conditions Report
A collaborative, weekly analysis, including recommendations for water managers regarding Lake Okeechobee flows.

RECON
SCCF's River, Estuary, and Coastal Observing Network is a network of eight optical water quality sensors deployed throughout the Caloosahatchee and the Pine Island Sound estuary to provide real-time water quality data.

Red Tide Resources

NOAA HAB Monitoring System - Lake Okeechobee

Algae Reporting App.

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