PMN History

Since 2001, more than 130 blooms and 7 toxic events have been reported by volunteer groups. The PMN volunteers provide valuable data on species composition and distribution in coastal waters. These results enable researchers to identify problem areas to isolate for further study. The success of the Phytoplankton Monitoring Network is largely due to partnerships with local, state, federal and educational entities.

PMN Highlights

November 2006
First identification of a toxic *Pseudo-nitzschia* spp. bloom in the southeastern United States

February 2008
First okadaic acid producing bloom found in Gulf of Mexico waters. Ten Texas bays were closed to shellfish harvesting.

Feb 2015
Mesodinium rubrum bloom detected in NC that delayed sea turtle release

Summer 2015
Pseudo-nitzschia spp. bloom along US west coast reached highest domoic acid levels ever recorded.

Center Background

The Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research (CCEHBR) is one of six National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) under the National Ocean Service (NOS). NOS is one of five line offices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which is a division of the US Department of Commerce (DOC).

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National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science

Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research

Jan 2016

Phytoplankton Monitoring Network

Promoting a better understanding of Harmful Algal Blooms by way of Volunteer Monitoring

NOAA

Volunteer with us!

Volunteer With PMN

Program

The Phytoplankton Monitoring Network (PMN) is a network of scientists and volunteers across the country that work together to study and record the species of phytoplankton that occur in Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific waters. Volunteers participate in hands-on research by sampling and identifying marine phytoplankton. The data collected by volunteers is then submitted to NOAA scientists for further analyses.

HABs

Phytoplankton, or algae, are normal components of all aquatic environments, creating the base of both marine and freshwater food webs. When phytoplankton bloom in significant numbers and produce biotoxins, these events are termed harmful algal blooms or HABs. Marine organisms as well as humans can be affected by exposure to these biotoxins, so the identification of potential HAB species present is important.

Volunteer Benefits

Scientific:
Determining the species composition and distribution of harmful & potential toxic organisms.

Outreach:
Educating students and environmental groups - raising awareness of harmful algal blooms.

- Participate in a federally-funded research program
- Learn data collection and microscopy techniques
- Conduct scientific research and field work
- Learn about phytoplankton and HABs
- Interact with NOAA scientists