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RED TIDE PRESENT IN THE GULF

Health Alert to Include Jetty East, Shirah Beach and James Lee Beach in Destin

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Fort Walton Beach, Fla. -The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) is notifying the public of a red tide bloom to include Jetty East, Shirah Beach and James Lee Beach in Destin. Some people may have mild and short-lived respiratory symptoms such as eye, nose and throat irritation similar to cold symptoms. Some individuals with breathing problems such as asthma might experience more severe symptoms. Usually symptoms go away when a person leaves the area or goes indoors. Health officials recommend that people experiencing these symptoms stay away from beach areas or go into an air-conditioned space. If symptoms do not subside, please contact your health care provider for evaluation.

The Department recommends that you:

- Do not swim around dead fish at this location.
- If you have chronic respiratory problems, be careful and consider staying away from this location as red tide can affect your breathing.
- Do not harvest or eat molluscan shellfish and distressed or dead fish from this location. If fish are healthy, rinse fillets with tap or bottled water and throw out the guts.
- Keep pets and livestock away from water, sea foam and dead sea life.
- Residents living in beach areas are advised to close windows and run the air conditioner (making sure that the A/C filter is maintained according to manufacturer's specifications).
- If outdoors, residents may choose to wear paper filter masks, especially if onshore winds are blowing.

Florida Poison Control Centers have a toll-free 24/7 Hotline for reporting of illnesses, including health effects from exposure to red tide at 1-800-222-1222.

Please visit the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research website for additional information on the locations where red tide has been found: myfwc.com/research/redtide/statewide/.

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