



NASA Discovers Large Blue-Green Bloom Off U.S. East Coast

Description

NASA satellites have observed a significant blue-green bloom along the shallow coastlines of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. First seen in mid-April, it has developed into large swirling patterns visible from space.

This bloom, which consists of a mix of blue, green, and brown waters, stretches for hundreds of kilometres along the eastern coast. NASA attributes its growth to a combination of river outflows, spring storms, and a high population of tiny marine organisms called phytoplankton. These organisms are essential for producing oxygen and are a crucial food source for many marine species.

Monitoring these blooms helps scientists understand ocean health. Satellite tools such as the MODIS (Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) on the Aqua satellite and the new PACE (Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, Ocean Ecosystem) mission allow for precise tracking of these occurrences. They analyse ocean colour to identify the types and amounts of phytoplankton present.

The patterns seen from space result from natural water movement and the biology of the organisms. River outflows and storms mix nutrients into shallow waters, creating conditions that favour the growth of phytoplankton. While these blooms can reflect ocean health, large blooms can also lead to harmful algal events.

At present, the eastern U.S. bloom shows no signs of toxicity. However, experts warn that, without new nutrients from river outflows or storms, it may begin to decline in the coming weeks.

Vocabulary List:

1. **bloom** //blu:m// (noun): large visible growth of tiny organisms in water
2. **phytoplankton** //,faɪtəʊ'plæŋktən// (noun): tiny living things in the ocean that make oxygen
3. **satellites** //'sætə,laɪts// (noun): machines in space that take pictures of Earth
4. **monitoring** //'mɒnətərɪŋ// (noun): watching something over time to learn
5. **outflows** //'aʊt,fləʊz// (noun): water that flows out from rivers into seas
6. **toxicity** //'tɒk'sɪsɪti// (noun): how poisonous something is to living things

Comprehension Questions



Multiple Choice

1. Which technology is used by NASA to track ocean conditions?
Option: MODIS
Option: Hubble
Option: Voyager
Option: SOHO
2. What types of waters does the observed bloom consist of?
Option: Red and blue
Option: Blue and yellow
Option: Blue, green, and brown
Option: Green and orange
3. Which region does the bloom stretch along?
Option: Western coast of the U.S.
Option: Eastern coast of the U.S.
Option: Southern coast of the U.S.
Option: Northern coast of the U.S.
4. What is the primary marine organism responsible for the bloom's development?
Option: Zooplankton
Option: Phytoplankton
Option: Fish
Option: Coral
5. When was the bloom first observed?
Option: Early March
Option: Mid-April
Option: Late May
Option: Early January
6. What do scientists monitor to understand ocean health?
Option: Weather patterns
Option: Fish population
Option: Bloom patterns
Option: Plastic waste



True-False

7. The bloom shows signs of toxicity currently.
8. Phytoplankton are essential for producing oxygen.
9. The MODIS system is only used for land observations.
10. The bloom is solely caused by the warm weather in spring.
11. River outflows and storms contribute nutrients to the ocean.
12. Large blooms are always beneficial to marine ecosystems.

Gap-Fill

13. NASA satellites have observed a significant blue-green bloom along the coastlines of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and _____.
14. The bloom consists of a mix of blue, green, and brown waters that stretches for hundreds of kilometres along the _____ coast.
15. Phytoplankton are a crucial food source for many marine _____.
16. Monitoring these blooms helps scientists understand ocean _____.
17. The patterns seen from space result from natural water movement and the _____ of the organisms.
18. At present, the eastern U.S. bloom shows no signs of _____.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. MODIS 2. Blue, green, and brown 3. Eastern coast of the U.S. 4. Phytoplankton 5. Mid-April 6. Bloom patterns

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. Virginia



14. eastern 15. species 16. health 17. biology 18. toxicity

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL4

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1. B2
2. blue-green bloom
3. ESL learning
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5. Level 4
6. NASA
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