

# red tide?

**dodge it!**

**Don't wade, swim or swallow water where there is red tide.**

With so many places in Florida to explore, we sometimes forget our beaches, lakes and rivers are natural places that change with the seasons. Enjoy Florida's wild and not-so-wild areas, and know when to swim it, shore it or dodge it.

**In Florida, red tide is caused by a naturally occurring microscopic alga (a plant-like microorganism) called *Karenia brevis* or *K. brevis***

*K. brevis* produces a toxin that can affect the central nervous systems of fish, birds, mammals and other animals. Large concentrations, called blooms, can change the water color to red, light or dark green, or brown.

### **Red tides occur all over the world**

No single factor causes a red tide. *K. brevis* is found almost exclusively in the Gulf of Mexico but has been found on the east coast of Florida and off the coast of North Carolina.

### **Red tide blooms can last days, weeks or months**

Blooms can change daily due to wind conditions and water currents. Onshore winds normally bring it near the shore and offshore winds drive it out to sea.

### **Report fish kills or illnesses**

**Fish Kill Hotline:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, **1-800-636-0511**

**Human illnesses:** Florida Poison Control Center, **1-800-222-1222**