

imals

The Red Tide Arrives In SC, And Mystery Of It Continues

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The red water kept many would-be swimmers on the beach this weekend, and the whitish blue glow at night was dazzling visitors who were near the shoreline along Monterey Bay.

But the red tide — which arrived along the Santa Cruz shoreline over the weekend the way it does every summer about this time — still remains a bit of a mystery for fishermen and marine biologists alike. However, one thing that they agree on is that it is harmless.

"The red tide comes in about this time every year," reported fisherman Joe Stagnaro this morning. "But what causes it I don't know."

While the red color may resemble a menacing scene from the movie "Jaws," Stagnaro reported that it

poses no danger to fishermen or swimmers.

Although Stagnaro reported that he had "never seen so many pelicans," UCSC Marine Lab researcher Dave Garrison reported that the microscopic plants which produce the red color in the water are only indirectly responsible for the arrival of the birds (see photo on Page 1).

"The birds are feeding on the anchovies," said Garrison. "The anchovies may be feeding on the red tide."

He reported that some of the microscopic organisms had been found in the stomachs of anchovies tested by the Marine Lab. The anchovies, which recently clogged the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor, still are abundant in waters off county beaches.

Red tides exist in the Monterey

Bay all summer, but Garrison said he wasn't certain about what brings them in to the shoreline. Their appearance locally is associated with late summer and fall's calm weather, which produces a stratification in the water. The less dense warm water at the top brings the tiny plants to the surface.

The plants are classified under the heading of dinoflagellates, said Garrison. Many of the microscopic organisms included in this group are bioluminescent, making the chemical light which appears as a glow in the water after dark.

The dinoflagellates causing the current condition are non-toxic, Garrison reported. He said the red tide will remain visible until it is dispersed by winds or rough water.



(Sentinel Photo by Dan Coyro)

Pelican Show Comes To Town

The pelicans were putting on a show off the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf this morning, showing up by the hundreds to dive for the anchovies that are still abundant off county shores. Besides the

pelicans and anchovies, local waters are also alive with a red tide, made up of microscopic plants. For story on red tide, see Page 2.

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