ALGAL BLOOM EVENTS

2005 - 2012 REPORT

A total of 67 algal bloom events were reported from 2005 to 2012:

- Events do not include blooms resulting in fish kills (unable to determine whether blooms caused fish to die)
- Events peaked in 2010 (n=14)
- Averaged eight events per year
- About 80 percent of events occurred between May and August
- Two events were identified in water spanning 35 counties
- Three events took place in ocean off the coast

Figure 1. Number of algal bloom events by year, North Carolina, 2005-2012

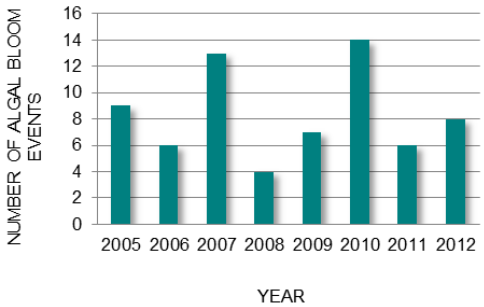
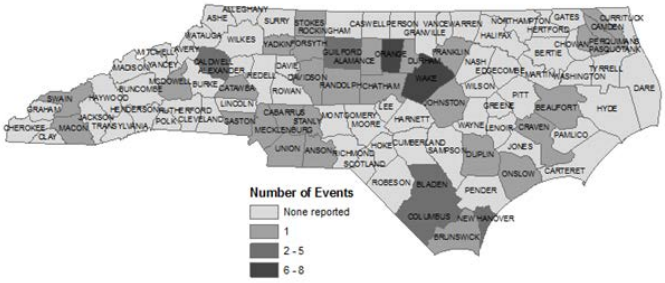


Figure 2. Map of frequency of algal bloom events by county, North Carolina, 2005-2012



Algal blooms are considered harmful if it contains toxin:

- Algal toxin testing was performed by the NC State Laboratory of Public Health
- About 80 percent of events (53/67) were tested for algal toxin
  - Cyanobacterial toxin(s) was detected in 74 percent of tested events (39/53)
    - Microcystin toxin was detected in 72 percent of these events (38/53)

Public Health Significance

- During these periods, swimming/wading in these waters or drinking the water is not advised
- Certain vulnerable populations include children and pets (particularly dogs)

NOTE: An algal bloom event is an overgrowth of algae in a body of water. In North Carolina, these events were reported based on a complaint or concern generated by staff from the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Division of Water Resources.