



# FISH KILLS

- Fish kills typically result from too little dissolved oxygen (DO) in the water.
- Low oxygen levels are caused by algal blooms or environmental conditions, such as cold temperatures in the winter.
- Stormwater retention ponds and canals located within residential areas are particularly vulnerable to DO-related fish kills due to the runoff they capture. The runoff (which contains excess nutrients from fertilizers, lawn and pet waste) feeds algal blooms thereby reducing the oxygen in the water.
- Fish can usually tolerate temporarily reduced DO levels without negative impacts, but prolonged reduced oxygen in the water can suffocate the fish community causing a fish kill.
- Most DO-related fish kills occur in the warmer months from May through September, during the rainy season.
- Once a fish kill starts, not much can be done. Most often, the conditions that caused the fish kill will not last for more than a few days but may last longer due to environmental conditions.
- No state or county agencies are responsible for cleaning up fish kills in privately maintained waterbodies, such as stormwater retention ponds.
  - County governments do take responsibility for cleaning up fish kills on public beaches, case in point during Red Tide events.

## **Who to contact in the case of a Fish Kill:**

### Saltwater Fish Kill or Freshwater Fish Kill in Rivers or Natural Lakes

If a fish kill occurs in a natural waterbody or is impacting other wildlife, such as turtles or birds, contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) Fish Kill Hotline. Submit a report of a fish kill online to FWCC at [Fish Kill Report Application \(myfwc.com\)](https://myfwc.com), or call the Fish Kill Hotline at 800-636-0511.

### Stormwater Retention Pond Fish Kill

Individuals may report stormwater retention pond fish kills to the EPC, especially if they suspect that a kill is the result of the release of an unknown substance. Submit a report of a fish kill online to EPC at [Report an Environmental Concern](#), or call 813-627-2600.