



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

GET THE FACTS

March 2016

News outlets and social media sites erroneously connect fish kills observed in Brevard County and the northern portions of the Indian River Lagoon with releases from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie River and Estuary in Martin County.

This connection is not backed up by the facts or the flow of water in South Florida. Water from Lake Okeechobee does not reach Brevard County through the Indian River Lagoon and has nothing to do with fish dying there.

Here are the facts:

- Fish kills have been reported in the Banana River and Indian River in Brevard County, nearly 100 miles away from where fresh water released from Lake Okeechobee by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers mixes with brackish water in the St. Lucie River and Estuary.
- The Brevard County Health Department and St. Johns River Water Management District have attributed the deaths in their area to “Brown Tide” algae blooms.
- No fish kills have been reported in the St. Lucie Estuary since the beginning of the year.
- No Brown Tide has been reported in the St. Lucie River.
- Separately, on St. Lucie Estuary conditions: The Corps has reduced Lake Okeechobee releases to the St. Lucie River from maximum releases begun on February 5 (approximately 4,500 cubic feet per second) to 1,170 cubic feet per second as of March 23.

#

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. Our mission is to protect South Florida's water resources by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.