

Sea turning red in Puducherry | National Centre for Coastal Research begins investigation

Sewage mixing into the sea, the reversal of ocean currents and an increased concentration of nutrients in the coastal waters contributed to the algal bloom, officials said

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The sea in Puducherry turned red on Tuesday, October 17, 2023 alarming residents. The phenomenon was attributed to algal bloom | Photo Credit: S.S. Kumar

The National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR) has attributed the harmful algal bloom, resulting [in a reddish tinge on the northern side of the Promenade Beach in Puducherry](#) on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, to anthropogenic influences, including sewage mixing into the sea, besides the reversal of ocean currents and an increased concentration of nutrients in the coastal waters.

The NCCR, together with the Puducherry government, has started a probe to look into [the phenomenon of algal bloom](#) in Puducherry's sea, and to find

out its origin. NCCR officials collected water samples from the coastline on Tuesday, after environmentalists expressed concern over the appearance of the algae at several patches along the coast.

According to NCCR Director M.V. Ramana Murthy, “There has been a reversal of currents from the north to the south, and it mixed with the sewage from the north. This resulted in a high concentration of nutrients in the coastal waters, which is possibly the cause behind this phenomenon. There is no cause for alarm.”

Aurofilio Schiavina, a coastal management expert and member of PondyCan, a civil society organisation, said the algal bloom first appeared around a week ago, along the Vaithikuppam coast. It again became properly visible over the next few days.

According to a senior official of the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee (PPCC), the algae grows with the increased presence of nutrients in the coastal waters. Preliminary tests done by the PPCC have confirmed it to be the red tide or algal bloom.

The water samples have also been sent to Chennai for a biological and chemical examination.