

The Climate Corner

Dead Zones

How do dead zones form?

When an excess of nutrients is released into a body of water, algae can increase rapidly. This is called an algal bloom.

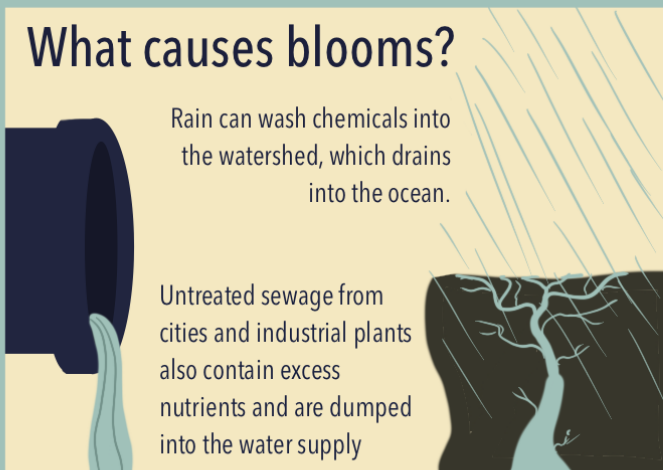


When these blooms die, they sink and decompose. This decomposition uses up oxygen and creates dead zones

What causes blooms?

Rain can wash chemicals into the watershed, which drains into the ocean.

Untreated sewage from cities and industrial plants also contain excess nutrients and are dumped into the water supply



What organisms do dead zones affect?

Organisms that cannot leave the environment, like shellfish and many benthic creatures, will die because they can no longer intake enough oxygen.

Mobile organisms, like fish and crabs, will leave dead zones for more oxygen rich environments

