

Lower St Johns River

Weekly River Field Brief

2011 April 4-7

Areas of Coverage: SJR main stem from Astor to Mayport, including Lake George, Ocklawaha, Dunns Creek, Crescent Lake, Doctors Lake, Deep Creek, Toccoi, Rice Creek, Dog Branch, Cat Branch, Cracker Swamp, Edgefield RST, Yarborough RST, Moccasin Branch, Old Hastings Drainage.

Water quality: Temps ranged from approx 18C Mayport to 24C at Buckman along main stem. Salinity measured to be greater than 5ppt at Buckman. Filtering was normal.

Weather/Rainfall events: Significant rainfall events Wed/Thurs of previous week, and Tuesday of this week. Tributary sampling runs should reflect later event storm water runoff. Mid main stem runs should reflect earlier event. High winds, tornadoes/waterspouts (at Piccolata) associated with Tuesday's event.

Algal/HAB: No significant blooms or scum formations observed at sampling locations (note disclaimer at end). Doctors Lake reported blooms earlier last week, but not observed or confirmed by field science team. Plankton collected from Doctors Lake was expedited to UF Wednesday for taxonomy. Plankton/bacterial samples collected from normal sites along main stem.

Foam: Wide swaths of foam were observed in the center of the river between San Marco and Ortega, estimated to be approximately 40 x 200 meters on Wednesday. This foam appears to be similar to the initial stages of last year's event, very thin. Very little wind observed that day. Low boat traffic observed. Smaller patches of foam observed from downtown Jacksonville to Dames Point Bridge. Foam was not stacked. No samples collected at this time.

Fish Kills: None observed.

Wildlife: Dolphin activity observed at Mayport area, Fort Caroline, and near Mill Cove. More than 32 alligators counted along Dunns Creek. Osprey nesting activity in full swing on channel markers. Eagle activity noted.

Other notes: Midge carcasses observed on water surface in northern Lake George at roughly 30 percent coverage. Dense crab pot markers observed off Bolles.

Projected areas of operation for next week: Limited due to temporary District Lab shutdown. Palatka to Shands bridge (shorelines). Ocklawaha River (below Rodman to Sharpe's Ferry).

Disclaimer: Field events are at scheduled areas, and often, close shoreline observations are not possible during these events. Shoreline surveys are usually not logistically feasible, as our main stem range is approximately 110 miles.

For questions, comments or suggestions on improving the usefulness of these weekly updates, please email me @ rburks@sjrwmd.com. Your input is appreciated.

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