**“Understanding the Risk to Recreational Fishers and Harvesters in Lee County, Florida from Exposure to Red Tides”**

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Florida red tides, predominately the photosynthetic dinoflagellate, *Karenia brevis*, produces compounds called brevetoxins that can cause illnesses and mortalities in fish, marine mammals and other marine life. Humans can be exposed to the effects of brevetoxins by inhalation of marine aerosols and ingestion of brevetoxin-contaminated shellfish, which may cause neurotoxic shellfish poisoning (NSP). NSP typically consists of gastrointestinal symptoms of nausea, diarrhea, abdominal pain and neurologic symptoms. As such, there is a cause for concern due to coastal communities depending on natural resources for food, health, economic security, cultural and spiritual benefits, and recreation.

Through online and paper surveys, this study seeks to understand the risk of exposure to licensed, recreational fin-fishers and shellfish harvesters from red tides as it relates to various variables (i.e., awareness, knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and characteristics). We expect to: 1) identify possible sub-groups that may be at more risk of exposure to red tides and what factors (i.e., purpose/beliefs) drive their decisions to engage in activities that expose them to red tides during a bloom; 2) identify possible sub-groups and quantity of licensed, saltwater fishing residents involved in shell-fishing as well as the quantity of those who have not reported symptoms of NSP; 3) determine the extent of compliance during shellfish bed closures; and 4) make recommendations for management based on research findings. In essence, it is important to identify ways to manage threats to public health from consuming brevetoxin-contaminated shellfish.