Publication No. 21-03-075



Summary

Art & Critters

Climate & streams

Combined factors

Eyes Over Puget Sound

ors Marine water

Aerial photos

Data

Surface Conditions Report: Sept 8, 2021



Up-to-date observations of water quality conditions in Puget Sound and coastal bays



Summary conditions at a glance



Photo by Grace McKenney



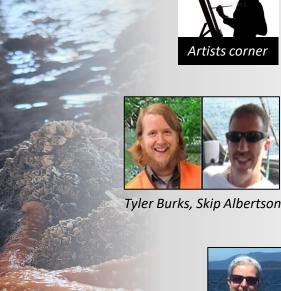
Art & Critters

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Artists corner, p. 3 Showcasing the natural beauty of Puget Sound through photography.

Climate & streams, p. 11

This summer river flows were generally lower than in 2020, and by August air temperatures were still warmer and precipitation was lower. Extreme heat and prolonged dry conditions led to a drought emergency declaration in July.



Water quality, p. 16

The higher salinity anomaly of the last month as a consequence of the drought is eroding away following a pulse in river water input in August. Lower oxygen conditions are developing in Central Sound by August

Julia Bos



Dr. Christopher Krembs

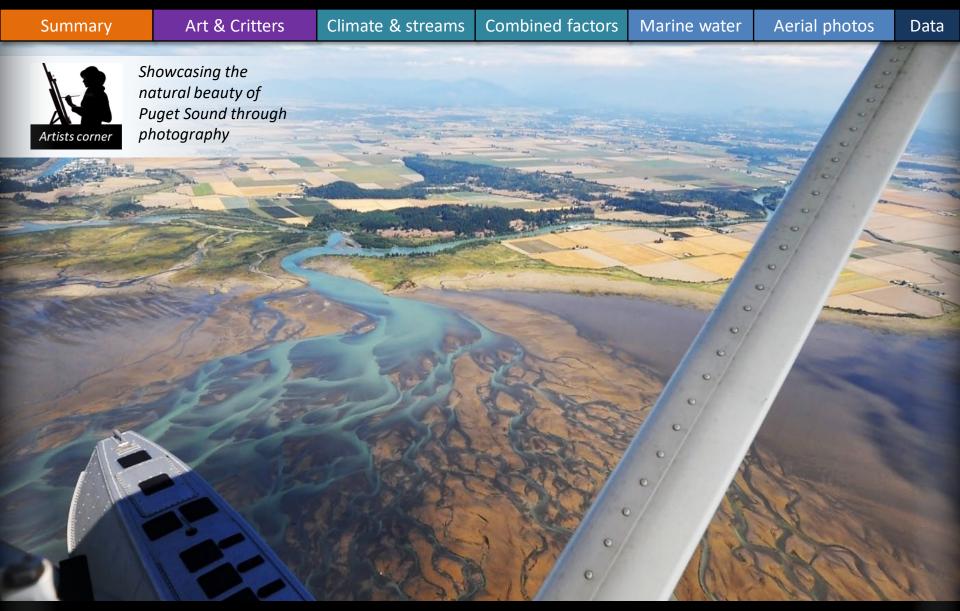
Aerial photography, p. 17

Many blooms and organic material were reported by citizens throughout summer, and by September many colorful blooms in bays across the region continue. Macroalgae and organic debris are still numerous in South and Central Sound, and in Padilla Bay. Jellyfish are occurring in unusual places.

Editor: Dr. Christopher Krembs, editorial assistance: Holly Young, Valerie Partridge.



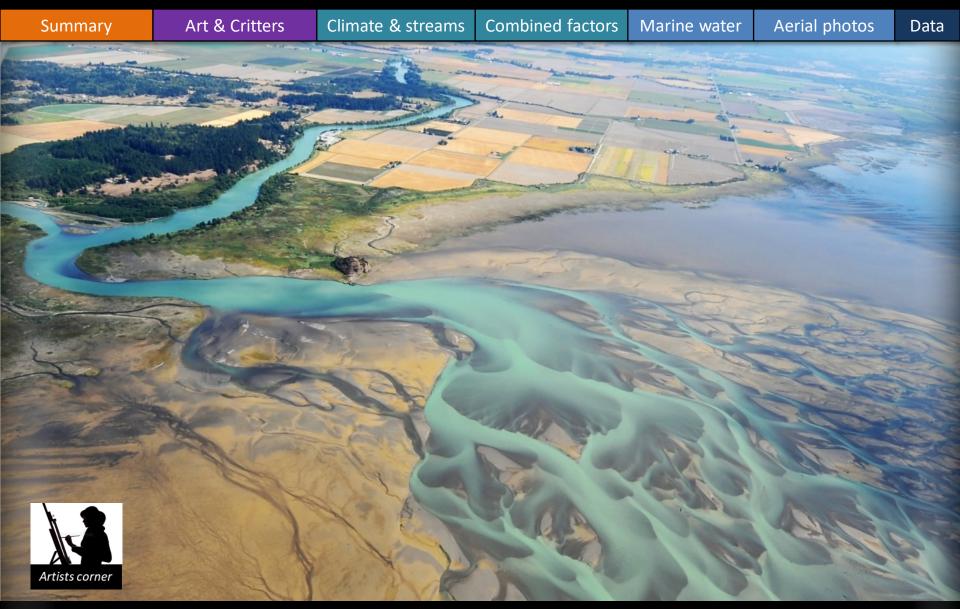




"Arteries of life": North Fork of the Skagit River flowing into Skagit Bay



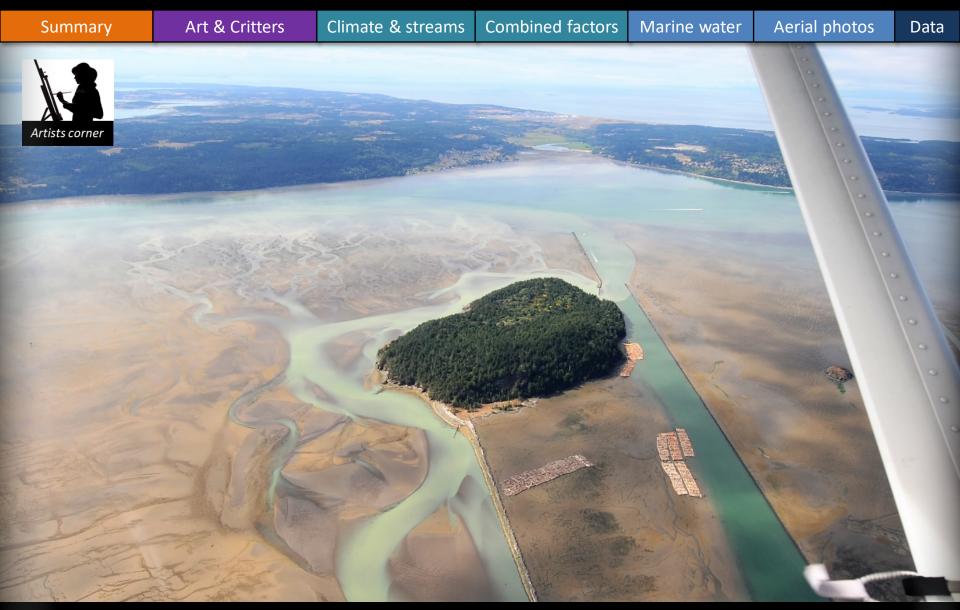




"Turquoise rivulets": North Fork of the Skagit River flowing into Skagit Bay



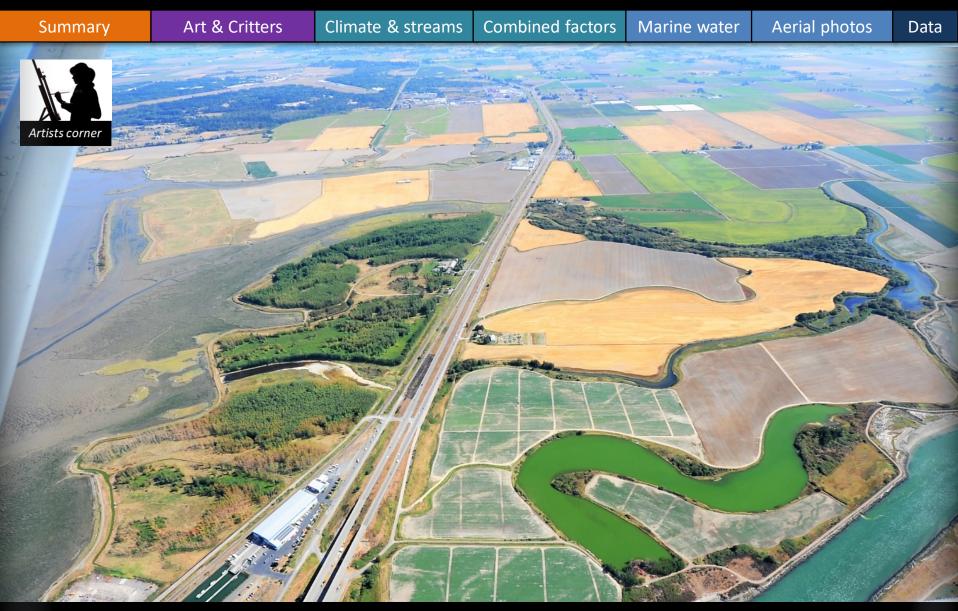




"The straight way is not always the best way": North Fork of the Skagit River flowing into Skagit Bay



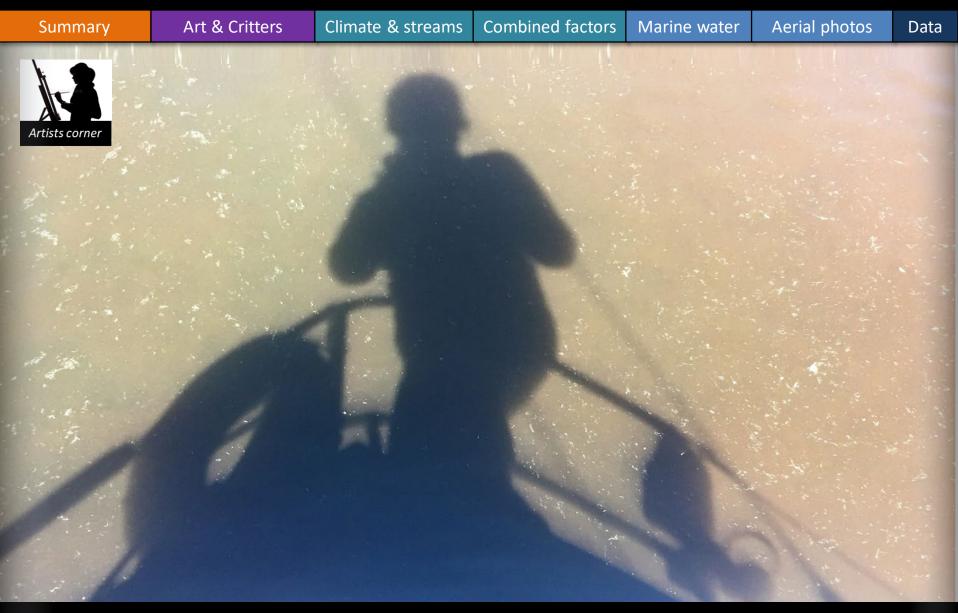




"The green caterpillar": Memorial Highway 20, Twin Bridges



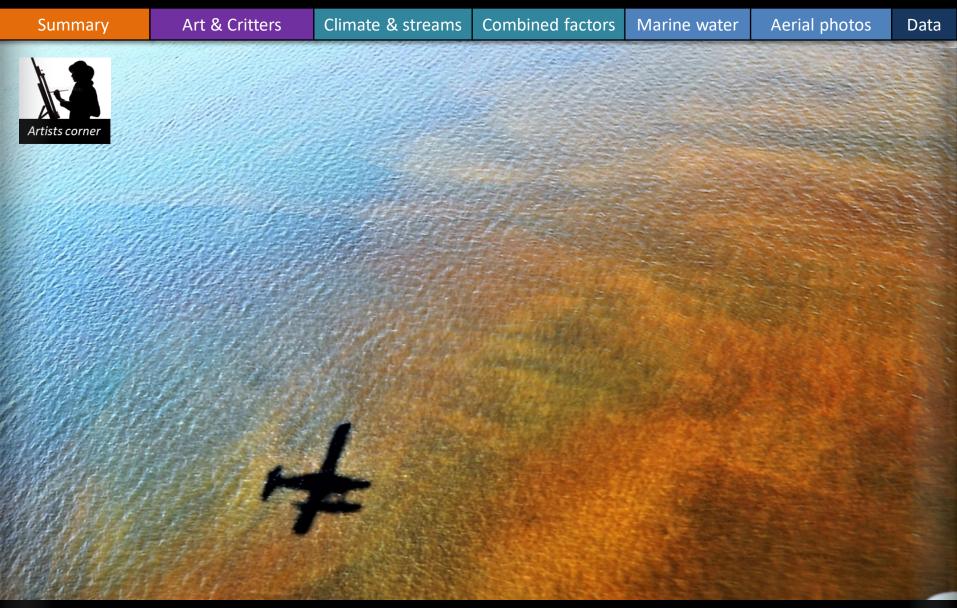




"Watching, wondering, where are we going": Noctiluca bloom, Shilshole Marina



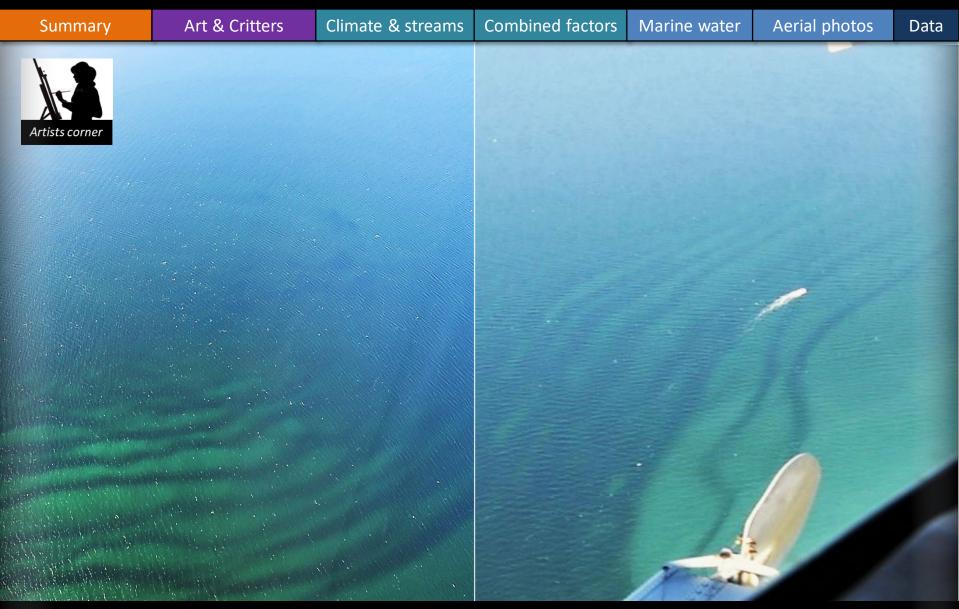




"Shades of autumn as time flies by": float plane shadow in red-brown bloom in Budd Inlet







"Internal visions": Internal waves off Birch Point, Strait of Georgia



Summary



Data

Critter of the Month – The Pacific Sand Dollar

Combined factors



Dendraster eccentricus

The washed-up remains of this beautiful critter may be easy to find on Washington's beaches, but sand dollars are anything but common. They can orient themselves with the water current, find their friends, and breathe through flowers. In fact, I'd say these amazing creatures are "worth their weight in sand"!

Climate & streams

Fun Sand Dollar Facts

 Juveniles swallow sand grains for ballast so they don't get washed away

Aerial photos

- You can age them like trees, by counting the rings
- They have "birds" inside of them



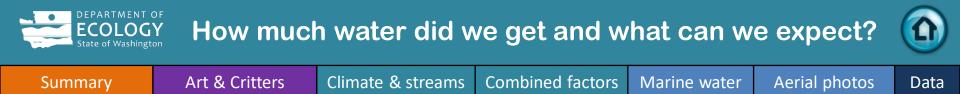
Art & Critters

Photo by Photoholic1

Marine water



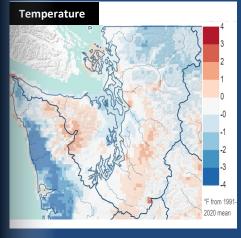
Learn more about sand dollars and other critters on Ecology's EcoConnect blog, click here

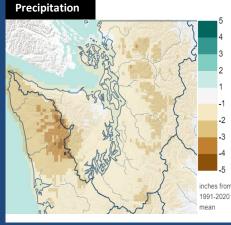


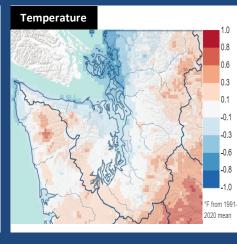


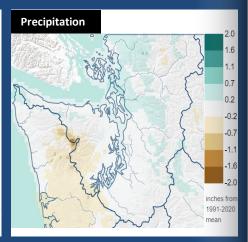
In the month of August, Puget Sound air temperatures were above normal with some north-south variability, while precipitation continued to be below normal (A). In the next 30 days, temperatures are expected to be near normal, while precipitation may be above normal in some areas (B). Extreme heat and prolonged dry conditions led to a drought emergency declaration in mid-July, but excluded the Snohomish, Duwamish-Green, and Cedar-Sammamish watersheds due to adequate storage.

A. Northwest Climate Toolbox (Previous 30 days)









Temperature Anomaly from historical mean ranged from -3 to +3°F in the Puget Sound region during the past 30 days.

Precipitation Anomaly

from historical mean ranged from 0 to -5 inches in the Puget Sound region during the past 30 days. Temperature Anomaly from historical mean is forecasted to be +/-1°F in the Puget Sound region during the next 30 days.

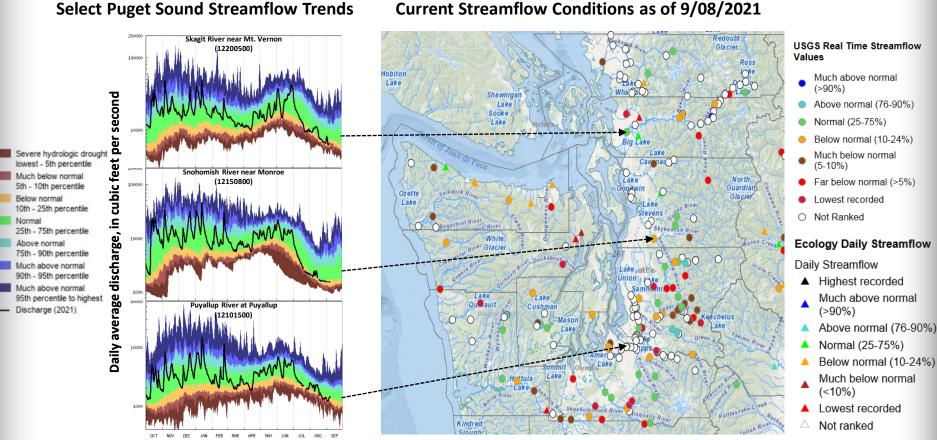
Precipitation Anomaly

from historical mean is forecasted to be between -2 and +1.5 inches in the Puget Sound region during the next 30 days.

B. Northwest Climate Toolbox (Next 30 days)



normal (trend charts, left). Typically, snowmelt occurs gradually, which sustains streamflow later into the summer. **Spatial:** Streamflow conditions (map, right) currently vary from normal to the lowest recorded for a particular date at that location. Normal flow conditions are found at snow-dominated watersheds with reservoir storage, while low-flow conditions are found in rain-dominated watersheds, or those without reservoirs that can gradually release water.



Current Streamflow Conditions as of 9/08/2021

USGS WaterWatch: CLICK HERE!

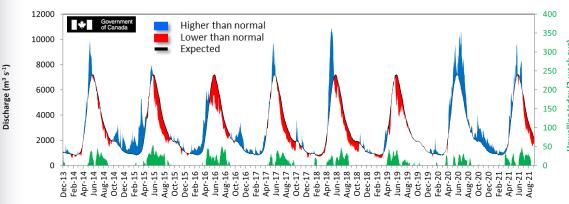
Current conditions: CLICK HERE!







Fraser River (at midnight)



The Fraser River is the major driver of estuarine circulation and water exchange between the Salish Sea and the ocean. The Fraser River flows in summer 2021 were lower than expected. Upwelling off the coast appears earlier.

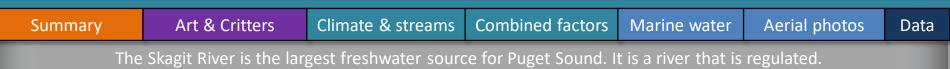
Three-year running average of PDO, Upwelling, and NPGO Indices



How do ocean boundary conditions affect the quality of water the Salish Sea exchanges with the ocean? Water has gradually cooled (PDO). Upwelling (Upwelling Index <u>anomaly</u>) is at expected level. Productivity in the eastern Pacific is lower (NPGO) (last updated June 2021).

Pacific Decadal Oscillation Index (**PDO, temperature**, <u>explanation</u>). Upwelling Index (anomalies) (**Upwelling, low** oxygen, <u>explanation</u>). North Pacific Gyre Oscillation Index (NPGO, productivity, <u>explanation</u>).

Y Climate: How well is Puget Sound exchanging its water?

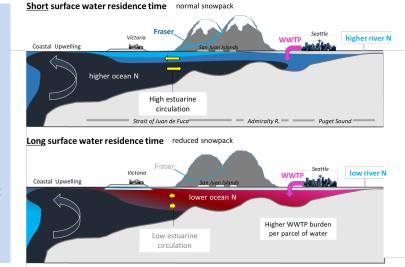


Skagit River (at midnight USGS)

The Skagit River freshet is no longer clearly pronounced, because it is a regulated system for hydroelectric power generation. However, drought years and low flows can be seen in the river's discharge data. In 2021, flows are lower.

Normal river flows drive **"natural"** nutrient inputs and keep the **water cool**.

Low river flows change the **nutrient balance and make** water warmer.



River flows and upwelling in the summer influence our water quality.

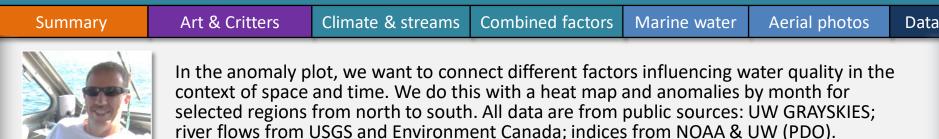
Rivers strengthen estuarine circulation in the Salish Sea. This is important in the summer.

Upwelled ocean water provides cool, nutrient-rich water.

For that to happen, we need northerly winds and good river flows (a good snowpack) during periods of water exchange through Admiralty Reach (neap tides).







Conditions leading up to September:

Air temperatures have been mostly warmer this summer.

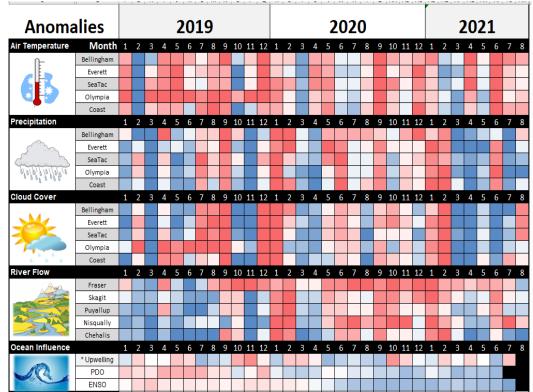
Precipitation has been much below normal since March, and is markedly lower than in 2020.

Cloud cover - Low cloud cover (sunny condition) follows low precipitation in 2021.

River flows are lower in 2021 than in 2020.

Upwelling has been variable this summer. PDO & ENSO are in cold phase (La Niña).





*Upwelling/downwelling Anomalies (PFEL) PDO = Pacific Decadal Oscillation ENSO = El Niño Southern Oscillation

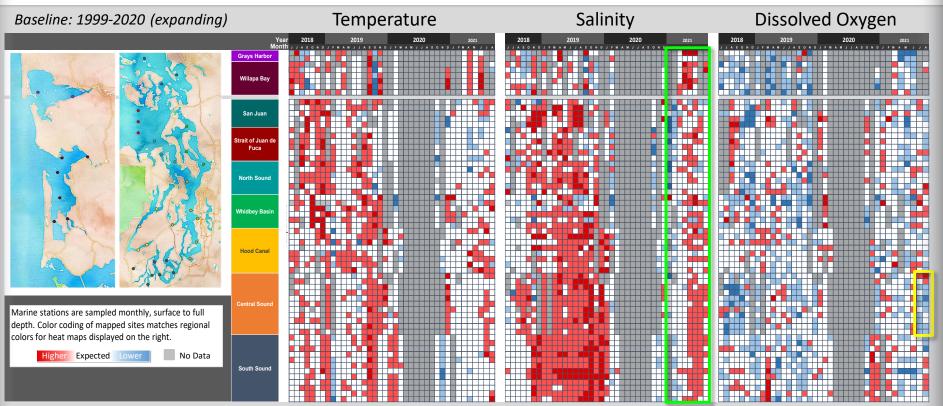
Boundary conditions lead to salinity fluctuations

DEPARTMENT OF



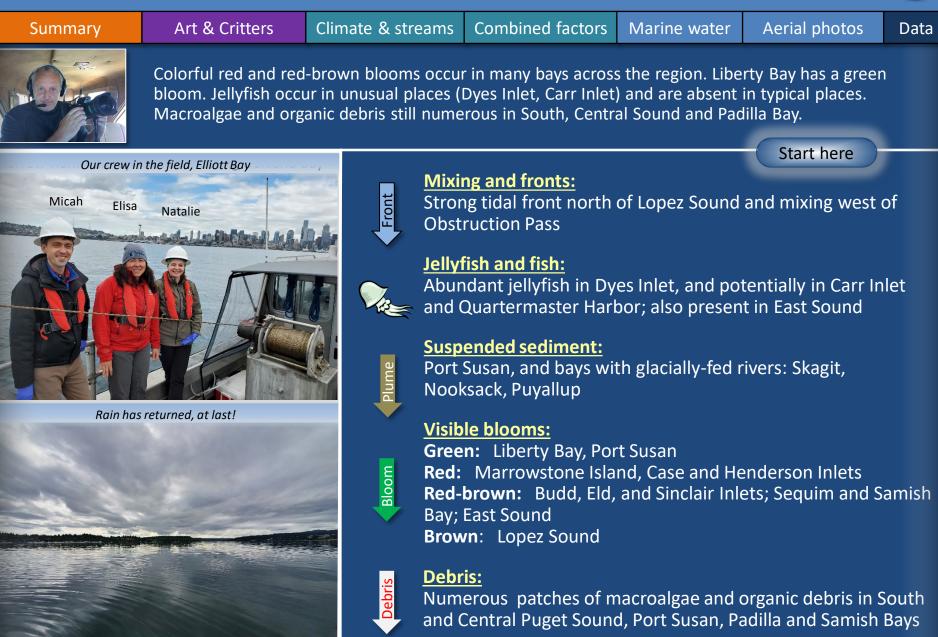
Summary	Art & Critters	Climate & streams	Combined factors	Marine water	Aerial photos	Data	
Marine Water Conditions: 2021 temperature, salinity, and dissolved oxyge							
	Coastal Bays Sa		lish Sea				
T: Low		T:	Expected with high temperatures in shallow inlets				
	S: Station S: Salinity normalizing			g			
and the second	DO: Attainme	nt DO	: Variable with lowe	r conditions in	Central Basin (bo)	().	

In July, a sizable pulse of melt water from the Fraser and Skagit weakened the positive salinity anomaly (box). Oxygen in Central Sound was lower than expected in August.

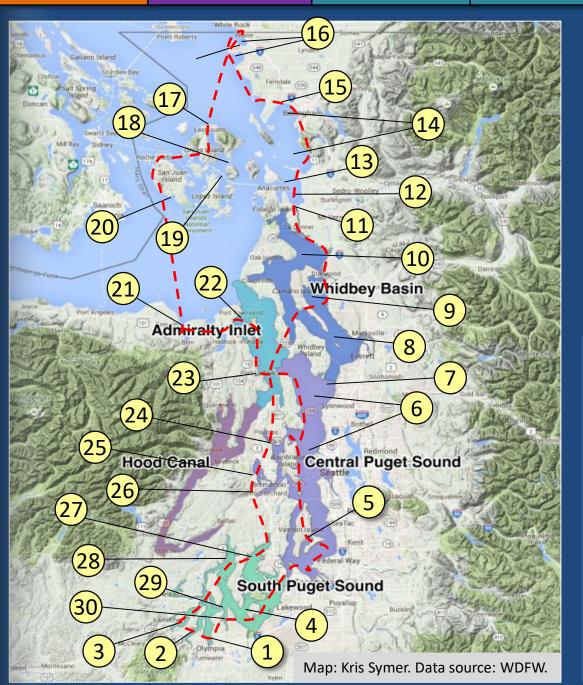








Summary









Click on numbers

Flight Observations High visibility, rain over San Juan Islands

Contributed observations



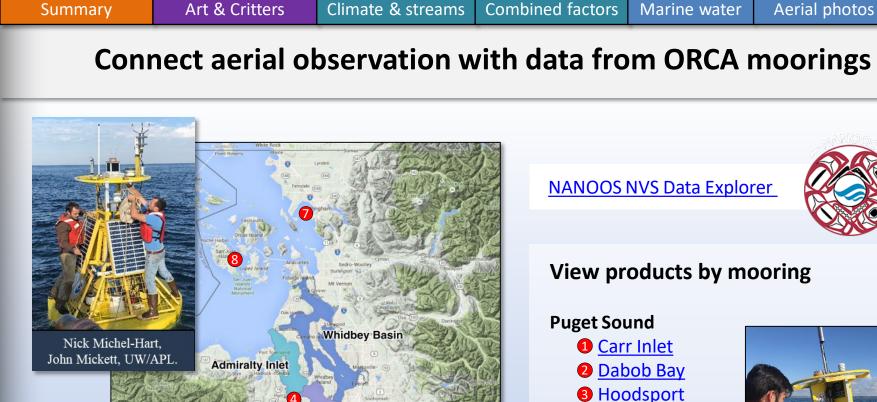
Tide data from 9-8-2021 (Seattle):

Time		High/Low
12:28 AM	3.47	L
06:06 AM	10.45	Н
12:28 PM	0.23	L
06:58 PM	11.63	Н

North West Environmental Moorings real-time data



Data



Central Puget Sound

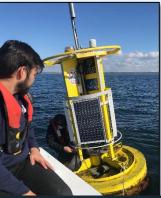
South Puget Sound

Hood Canal

- <u>Hansville</u>
 <u>Point Wells</u>
- 6 <u>Twanoh</u>

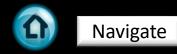
Salish Sea

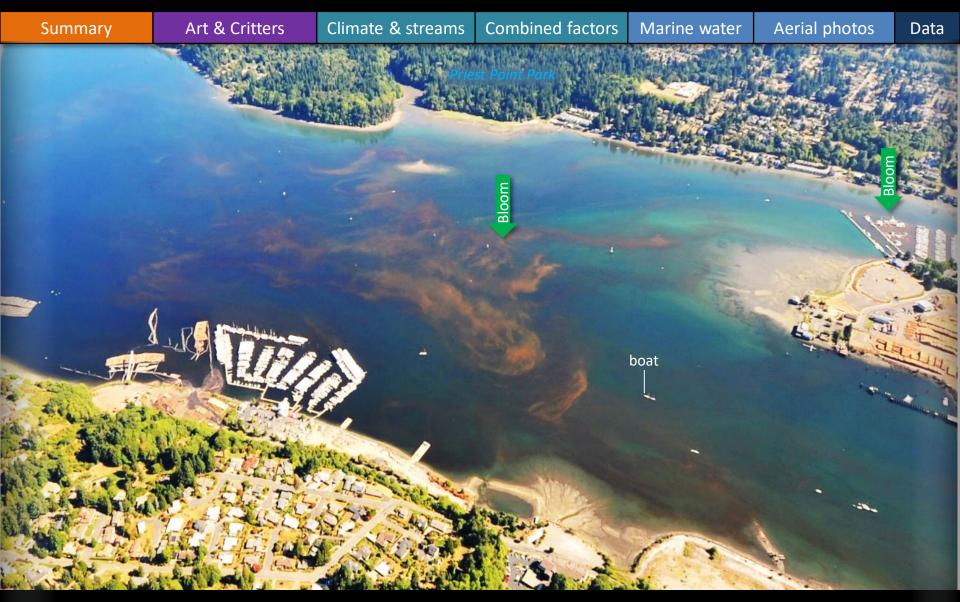
Bellingham Bay
Friday Harbor



Thayne Yazzie, NWIC, Robert Daniels, UW/APL



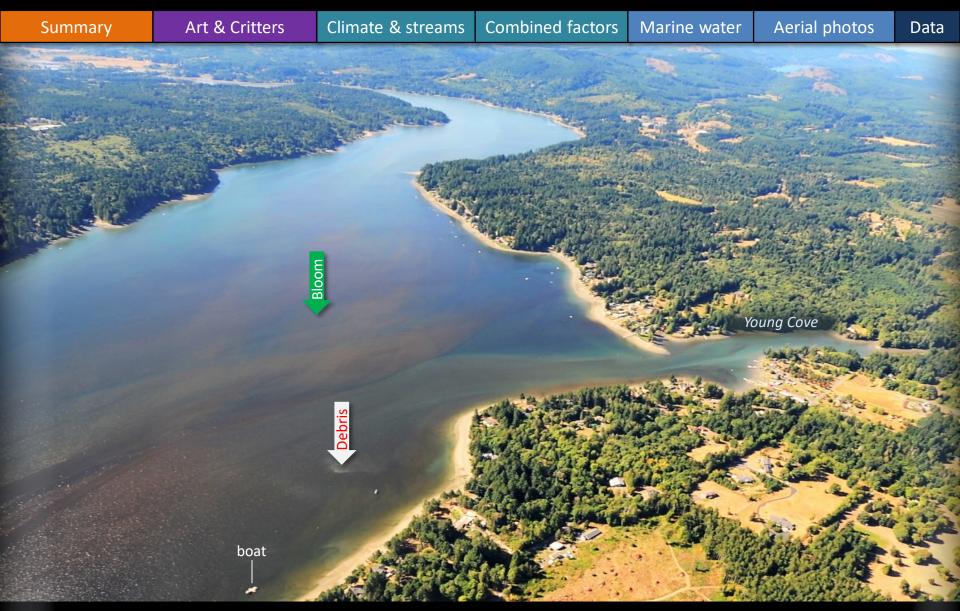




Strong red-brown bloom. Location: Budd Inlet (South Sound), 11:34 AM



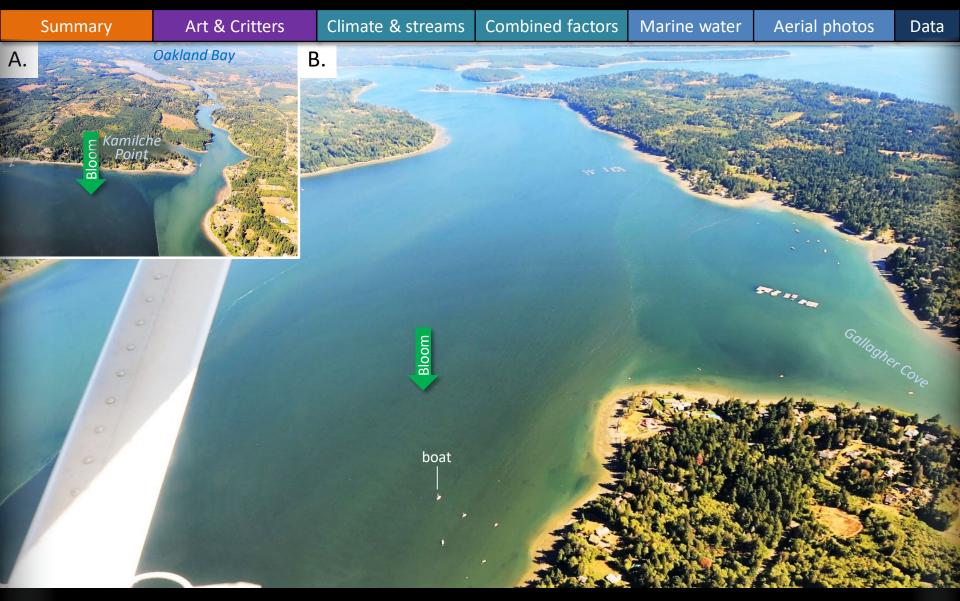




Red-brown bloom and milky-white water originating in Young Cove. Location: Eld Inlet (South Sound), 11:35 AM



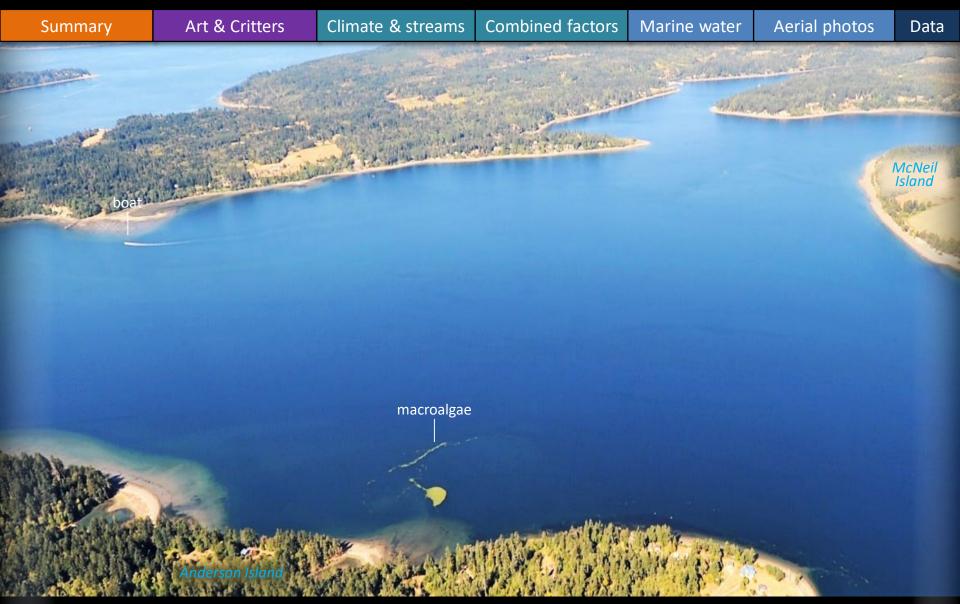




Different-colored water originating from A. Oakland Bay. B. Water remaining separated while flowing north. Location: Totten Inlet (South Sound), 11:38 AM

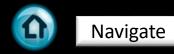


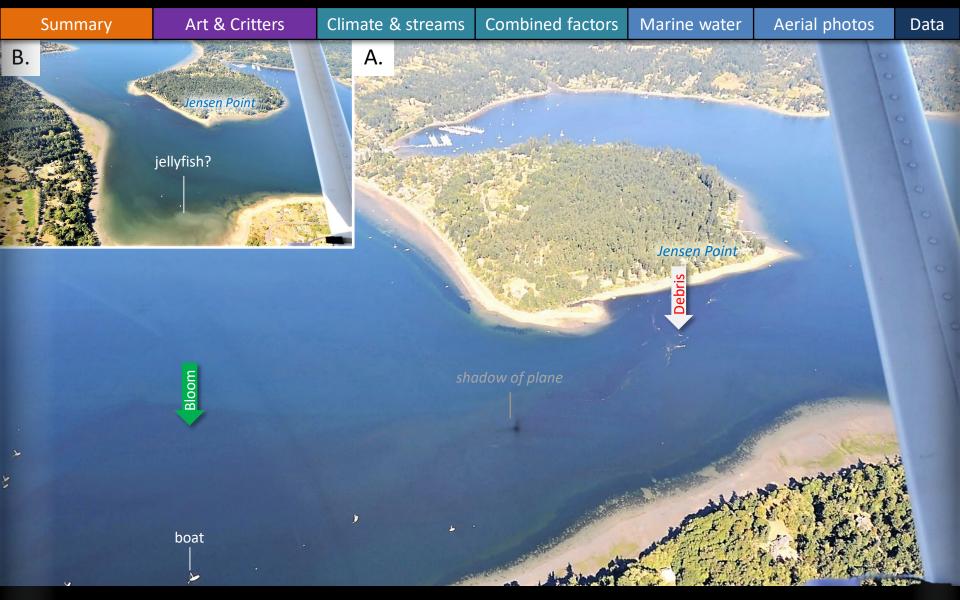




Large raft of organic material. Location: Anderson Island (South Sound), 11:46 AM





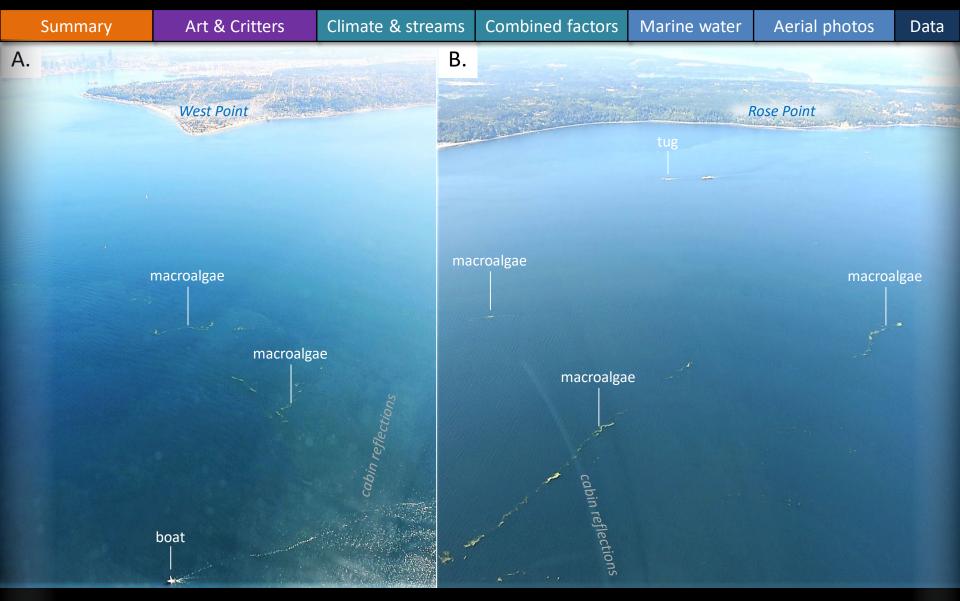


A. Weak brown-reddish bloom near Dockton. B. Whitish water, perhaps jellyfish, in Rabbs Lagoon. Location: Quartermaster Harbor (Central Sound) 11:55 AM DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington

6

Aerial photography 9-8-2021

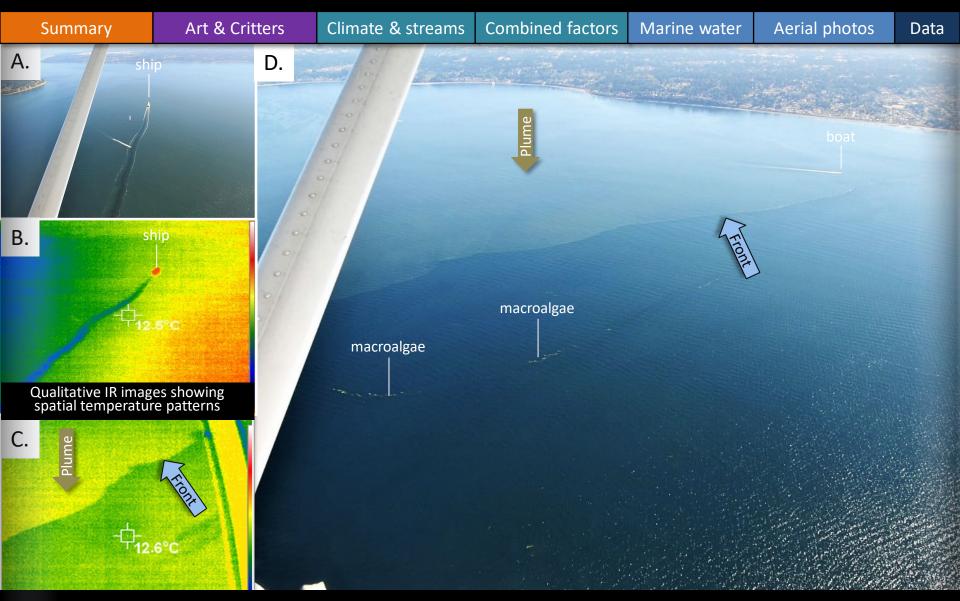




Large of organic debris drifting between A. West Point and B. Kingston. Location: Carr Inlet (Central Sound), 12:01 PM



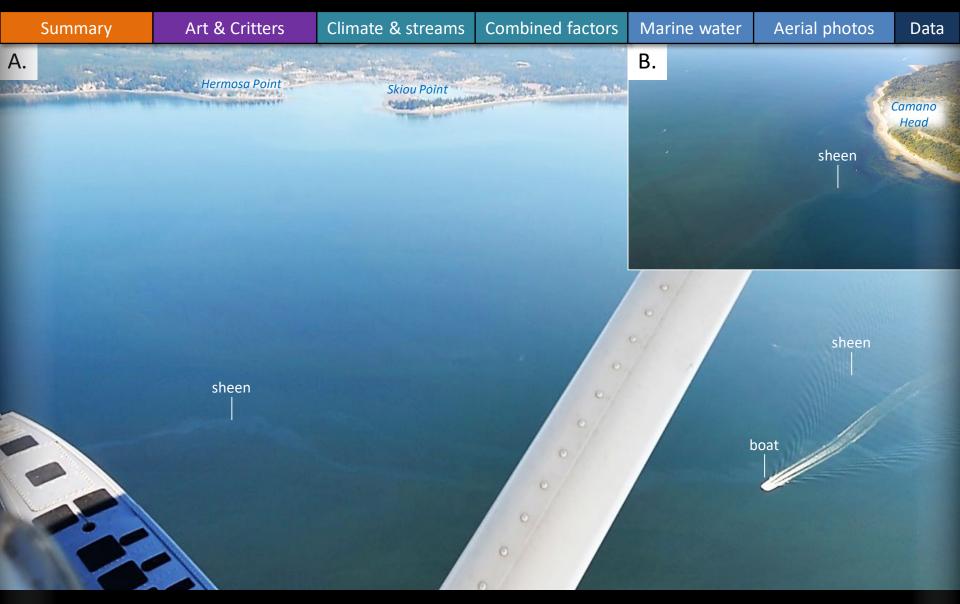




The wake of a boat reveals A. a thin surface layer of lower-density water and B-C. slightly warmer water from Whidbey Basin entering Central Sound. Location: Edmonds (Central Sound), 12:12 PM



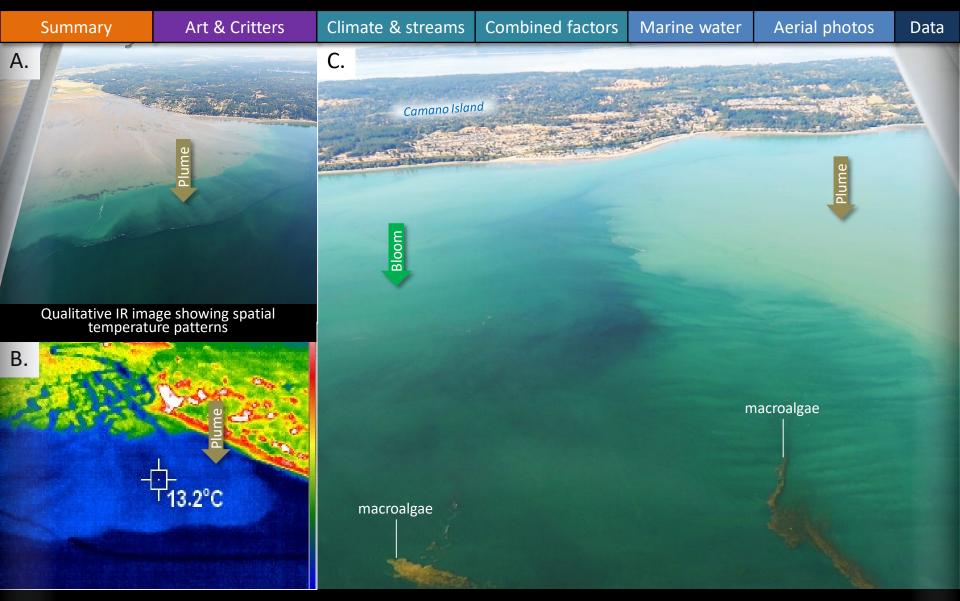




Long oil sheen stretching from Hat Island to Camano Head. Location: Entrance to Port Susan (Whidbey Basin), 12:17 PM 9 DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington

Aerial photography 9-8-2021





A. Stillaguamish estuary with B. relatively cool tideflat despite sunshine. C. Large rafts of organic material of different color and composition. Location: Port Susan (Whidbey Basin), 12:23 PM



Organic material accumulating at edge of Skagit River plume. Location: Skagit Bay (North Sound), 12:28 PM



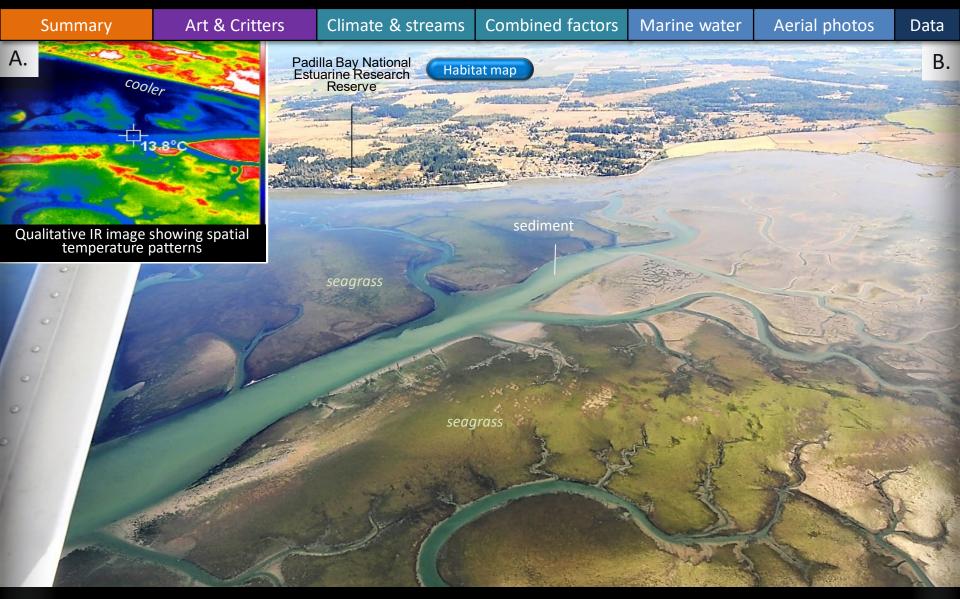




Very green bloom in an old disconnected slough. Very different water colors in Telegraph and Blind Sloughs and as the water enters the Swinomish Channel. Location: Swinomish Channel (North Sound), 12:33 PM

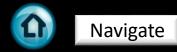


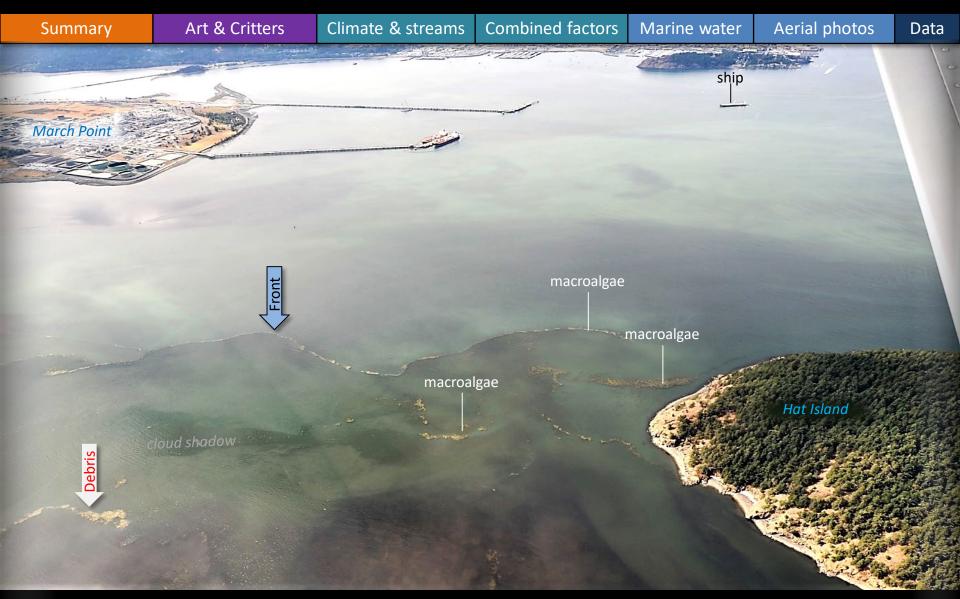




Padilla Bay seagrass experiences much cooler temperatures north of the tidal gully. Sediment from south of the gully discolors the water. Location: Padilla Bay (North Sound), 12:35 PM



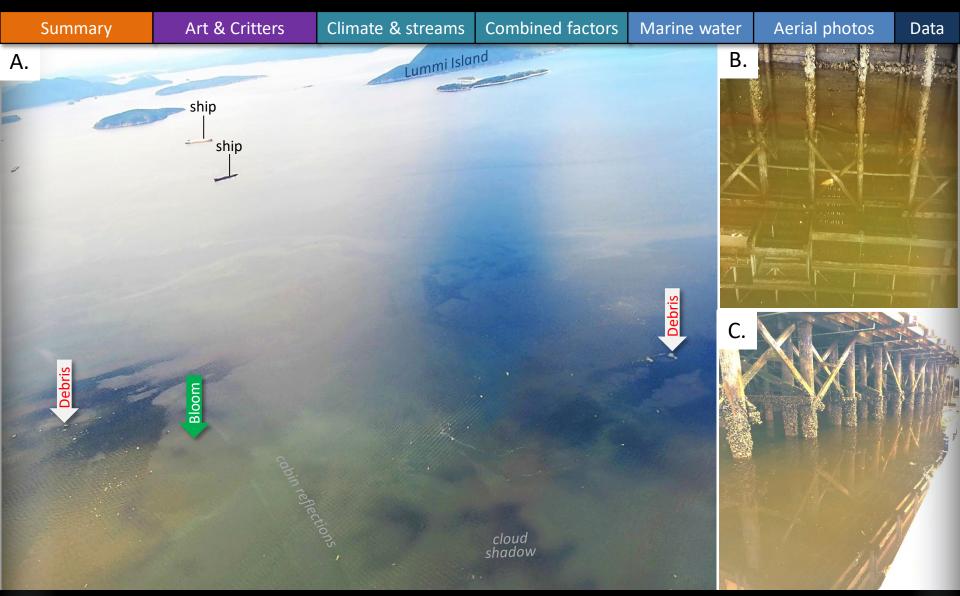




Large rafts of organic material drifting in water discolored by a bloom. Location: Padilla Bay (North Sound), 12:36 PM



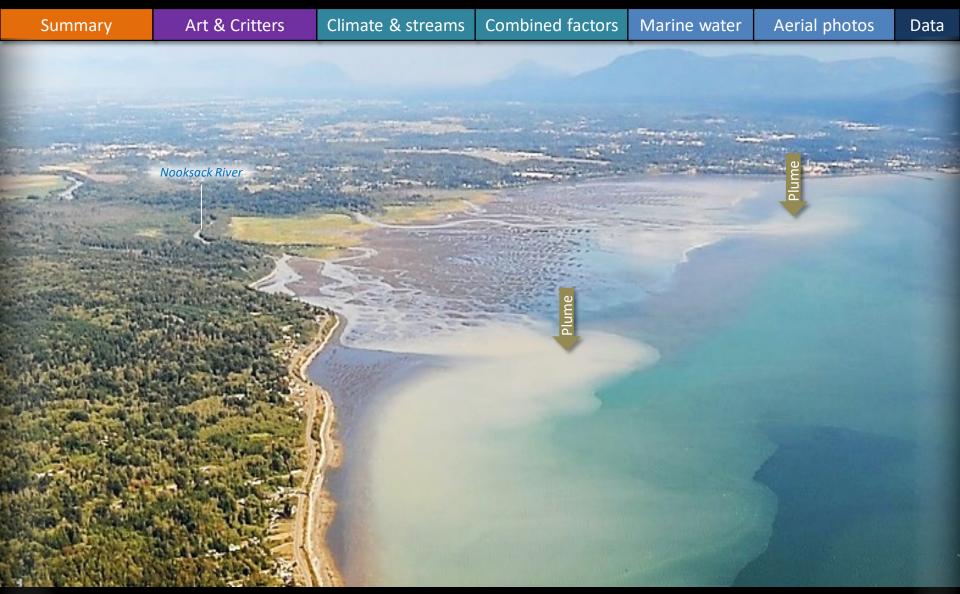




A. Strong red bloom and drifting organic material in Samish Bay. B-C. Red-brown bloom in Squalicum Harbor. Location: A. Samish Bay, B-C. Bellingham Bay (North Sound), 12:40 PM



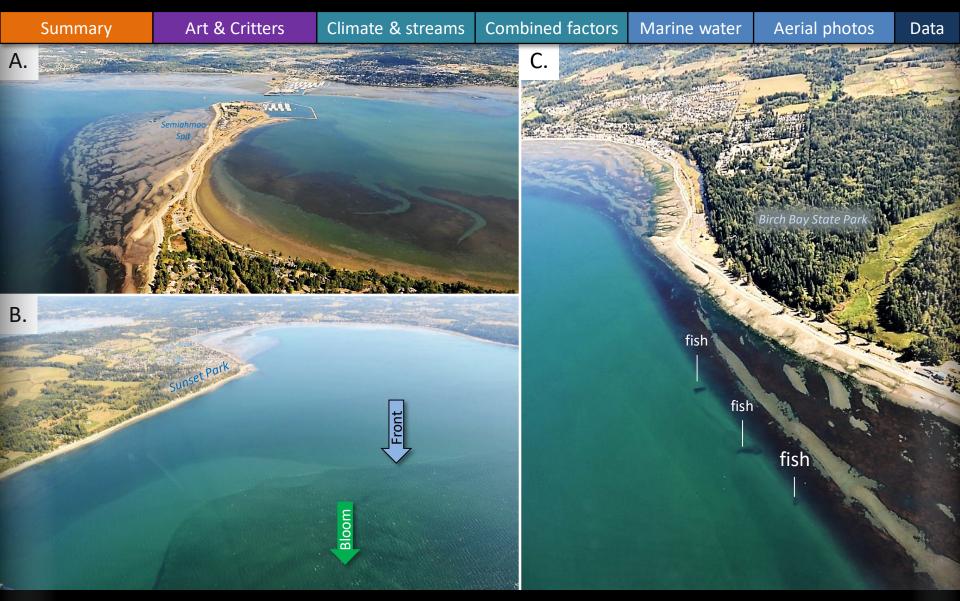




Plumes of the forks of the Nooksack River moving in opposite directions. Location: Bellingham Bay (North Sound), 12:46 PM



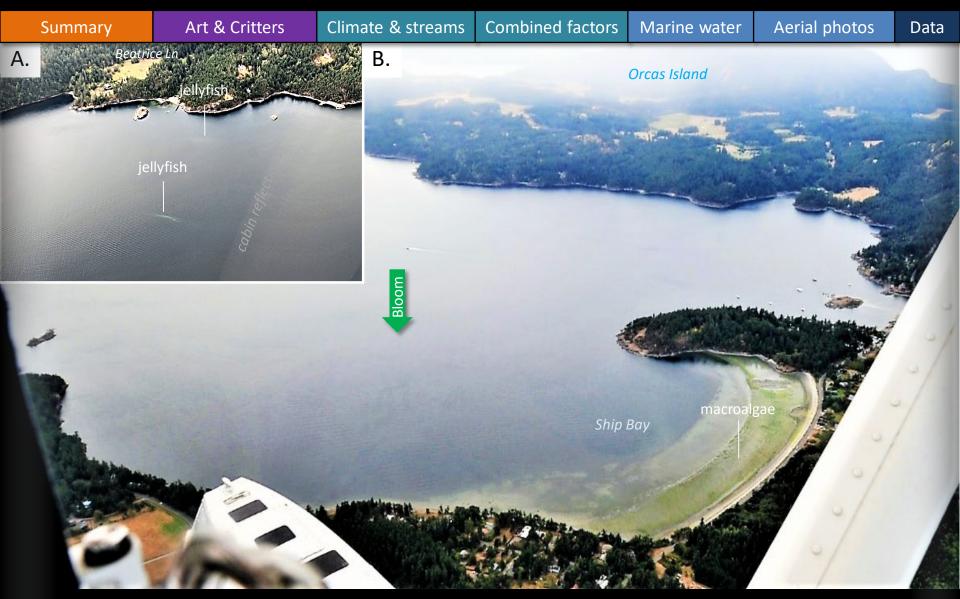




A. Drayton Harbor with seagrass. B. Front and different water masses at entrance to Birch Bay. C. Schools of fish near seagrass bed. Location: A. Drayton Harbor, B-C. Birch Bay (North Sound), 12:53 PM



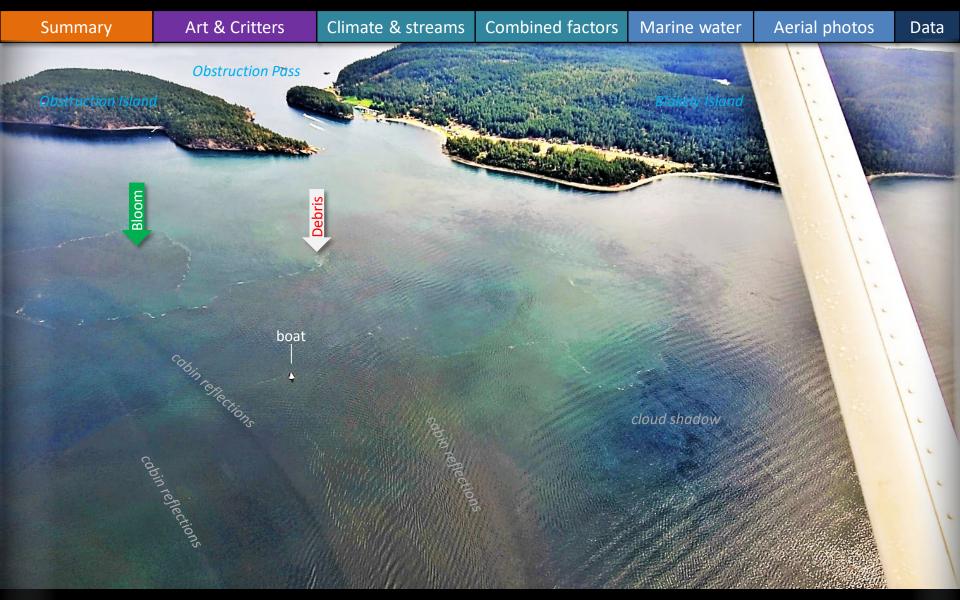




A. Patches of jellyfish, red-brown bloom (low visibility due to rain) and B. macroalgae on beach in Ship Bay. Location: East Sound, Orcas Island (North Sound), 1:07 PM



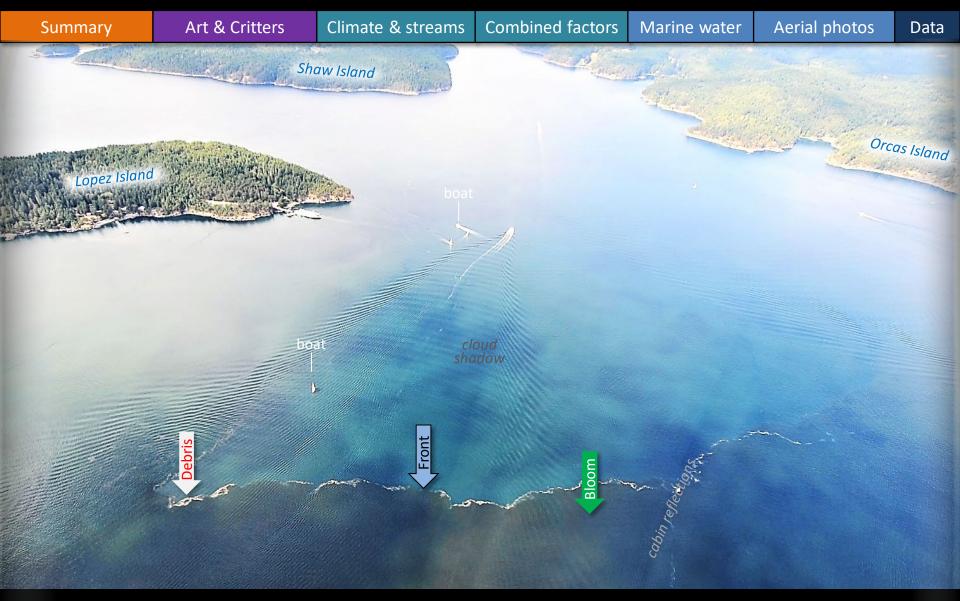




Red-brown algae bloom from East Sound mixing with clearer water entering via Obstruction Pass. Location: East Sound, Orcas Island (North Sound), 1:12PM



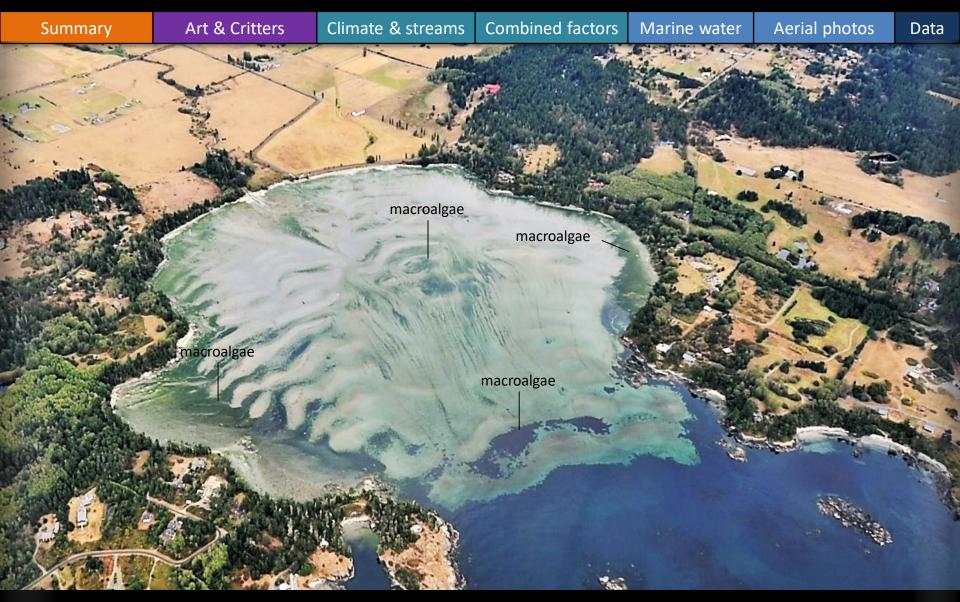




Strong brown bloom and organic material accumulating at a distinct front. Location: Shoal Bay (North Sound), 1:12 PM



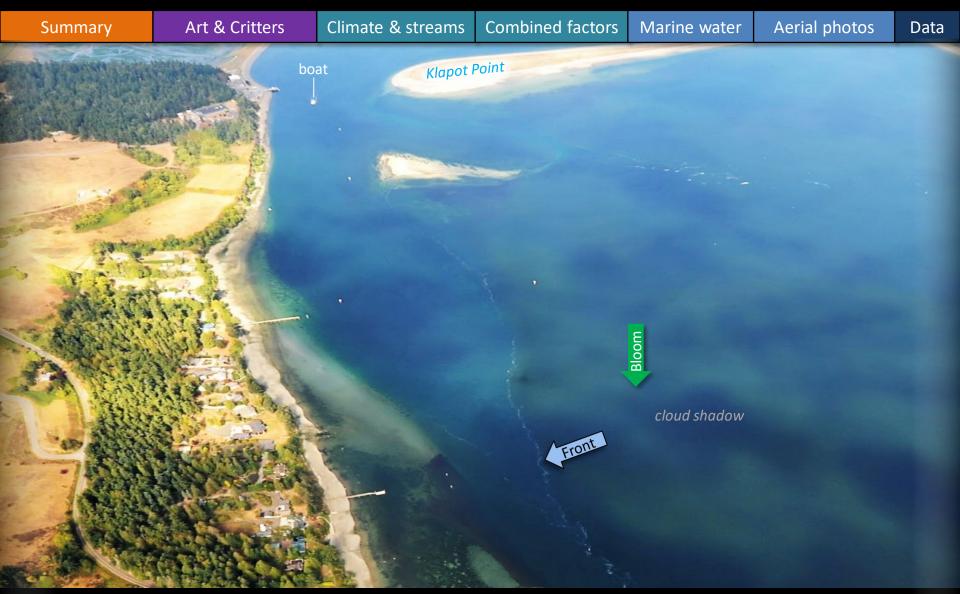




Macroalgae growing around perimeter of False Bay. Location: San Juan Island (San Juan Islands), 1:24 PM







Bloom, tidal front, organic material, and suspended sediment near western shoreline. Location: Sequim Bay (North Sound), 1:40 PM







Very red-brown bloom spanning the entire length of Kilisut Harbor, from the entrance of the bay to Scow Bay. Location: Marrowstone Island (Central Sound), 1:50 PM

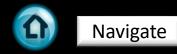


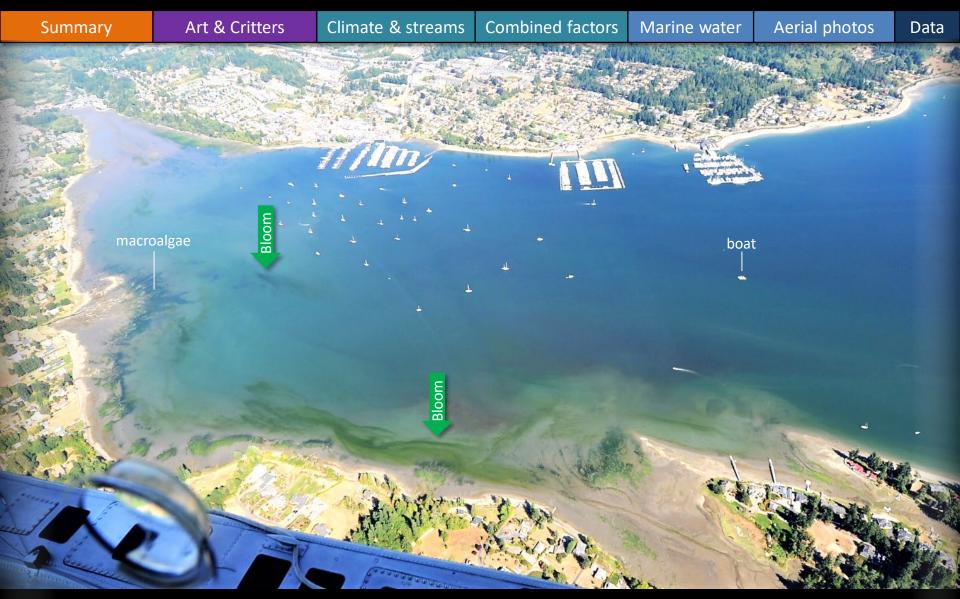




A. Long ribbons of organic material drifting at surface. B. Turquoise-colored water in Mats Mats Bay. Location: A. Port Ludlow, B. Mats Mats Bay (Central Sound), 1:54 PM



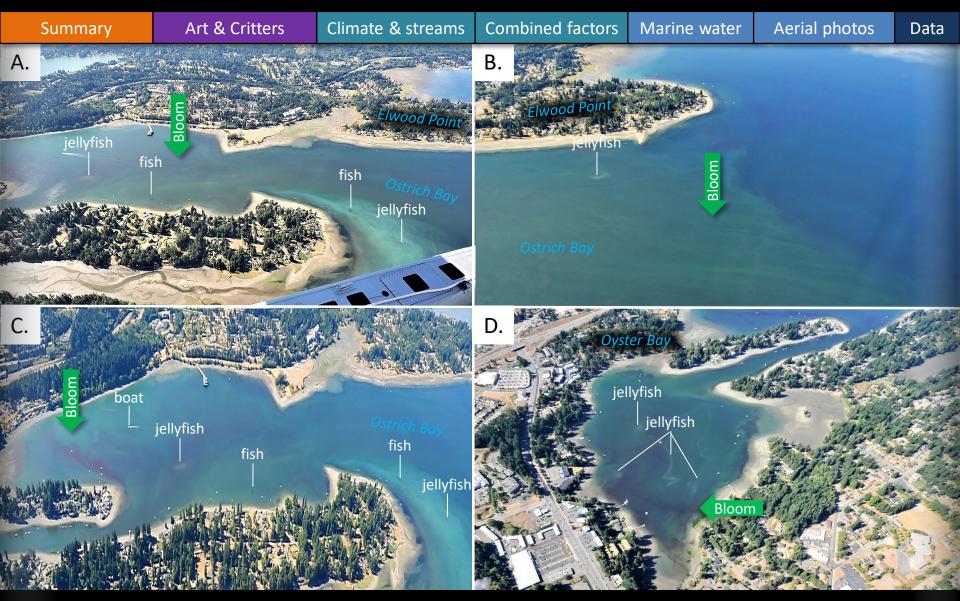




Bright-green bloom patches in shallow portions of Liberty Bay. Location: Liberty Bay (Central Sound), 2:02 PM



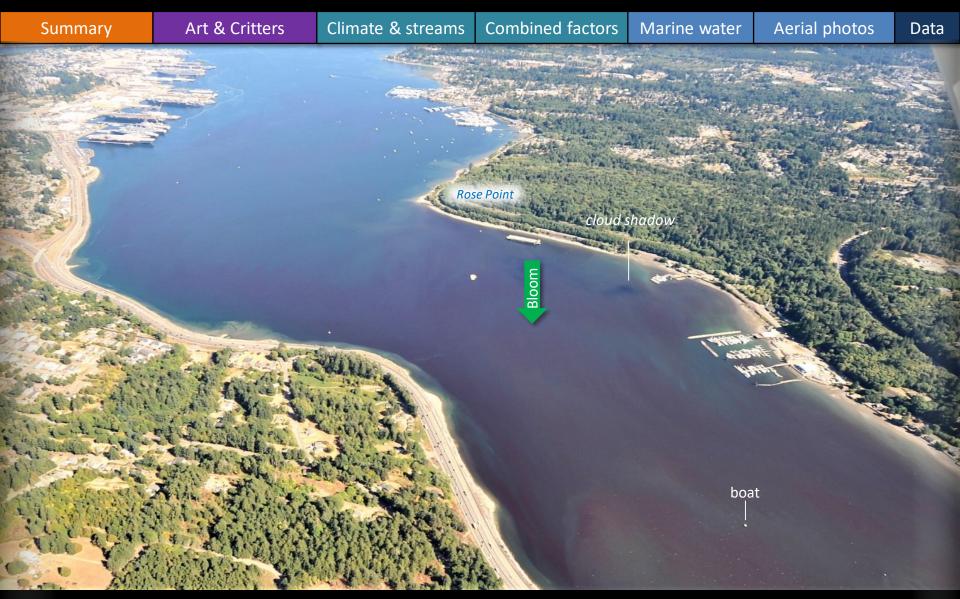




A. Milky-white patches and red-brown bloom in Ostrich Bay. B-D. Jellyfish patches in Ostrich and Oyster Bays. Location: Dyes Inlet (Central Sound), 2:08 PM







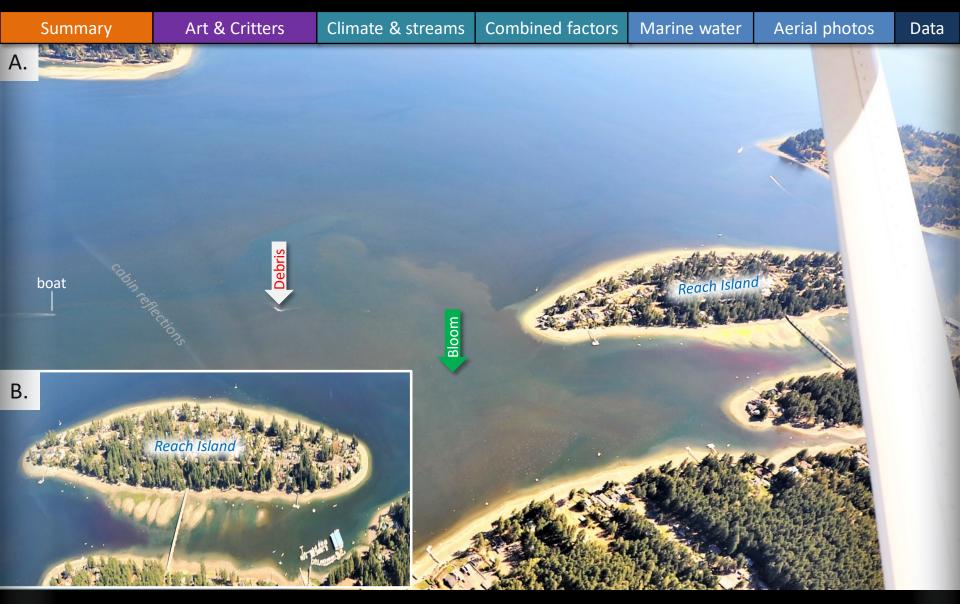
Strong red-brown bloom, but no jellyfish. Location: Sinclair Inlet (Central Sound), 2:11 PM



Turqouise patch that appeared granular, which could be a diffuse patch of jellyfish. Location: Carr Inlet (Central Sound), 2:18 PM



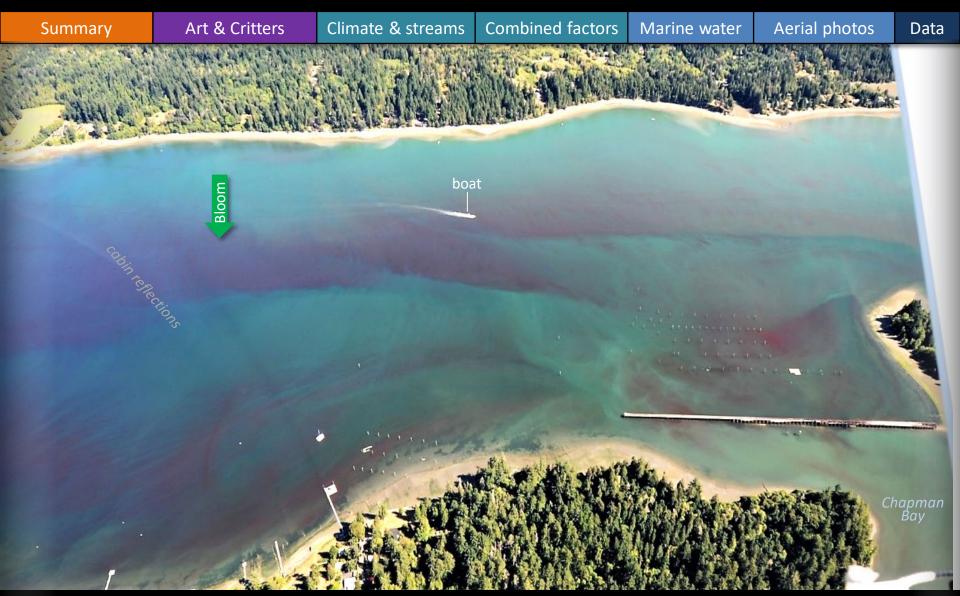




A. Red-brown and red bloom. B. It matters on which side of the bridge one takes a plankton sample! Location: Case Inlet (South Sound), 2:22 PM



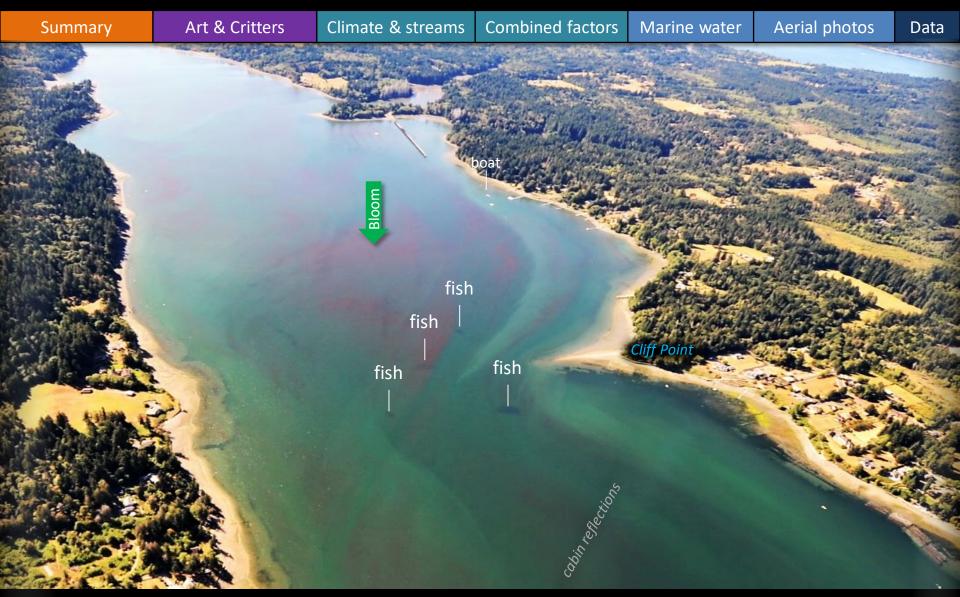




Strong red-brown bloom with turquoise water mixing in from Chapman bay. Location: Henderson Inlet (South Sound), 2:30 PM







Strong red-brown bloom with turquoise water mixing in from Chapman bay. Schools of fish near Cliff Point. Location: Henderson Inlet (South Sound), 12:42 PM

People contributing their own observations





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We add your observations to EOPS because we believe they matter.

Navigate

- In the following pages you will find water quality issues that engaged and concerned citizens submitted to us.
- We feel that your observations should be shared side-by-side with aerial photo records.
- We encourage you to share your observations with us. Together we can document more.



Mya Keyzers, 7/14/2021, East Sound, Orcas Island



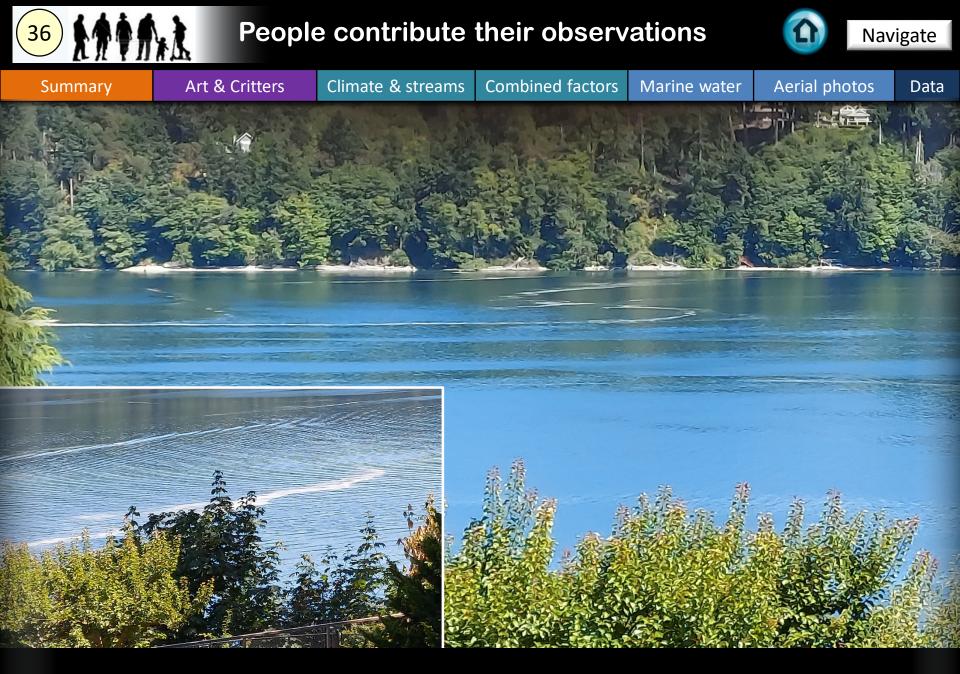
Jacquelyn Stenman and Michael Dawson, 7/20/2021, Port Ludlow, stench complaint (ERTS#708105)



Josephine Strauss, 7/23/2021, Oyster Bay, Madrona Point and channel that leads out to Dyes Inlet



Eryn Craig, 8/9/2021, Bainbridge ferry route



Jim Baker, 8/4/2021, organic material rafts, Port Orchard

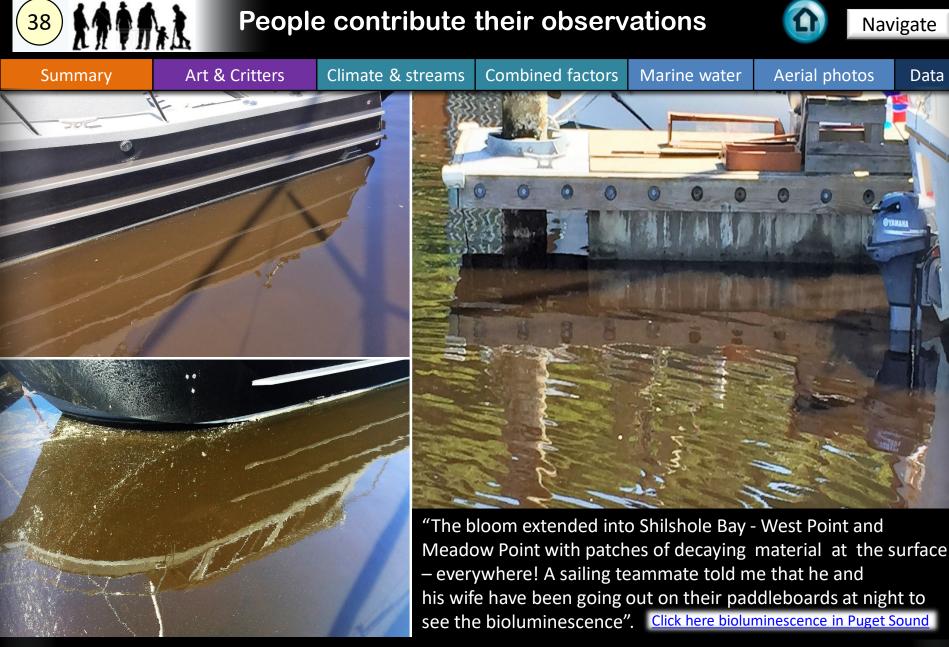


Maria Mason, 8/5/2021, Bainbridge Island facing West Point

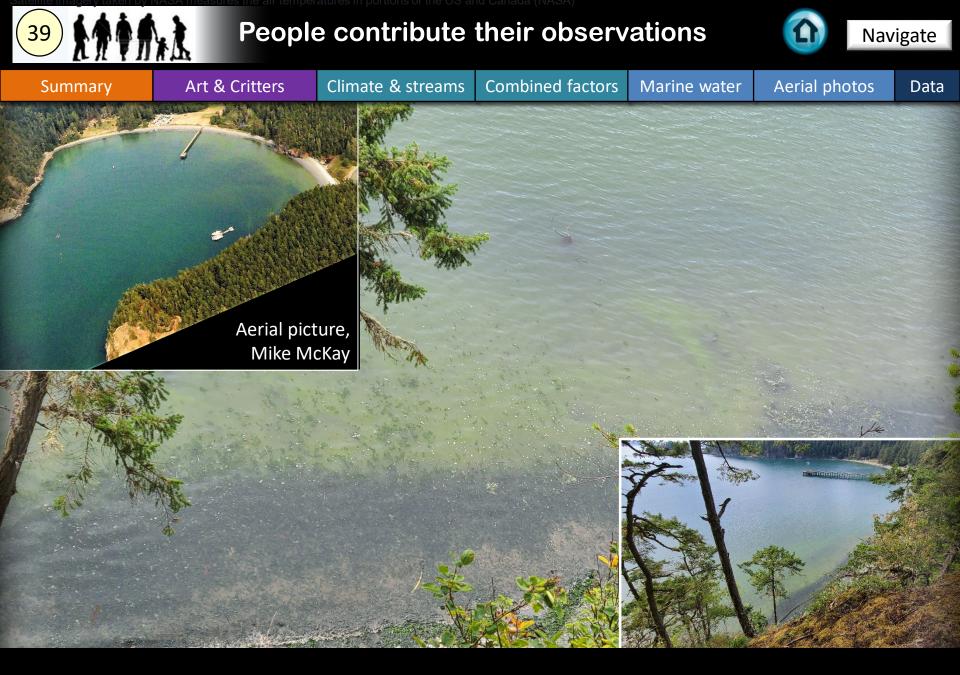




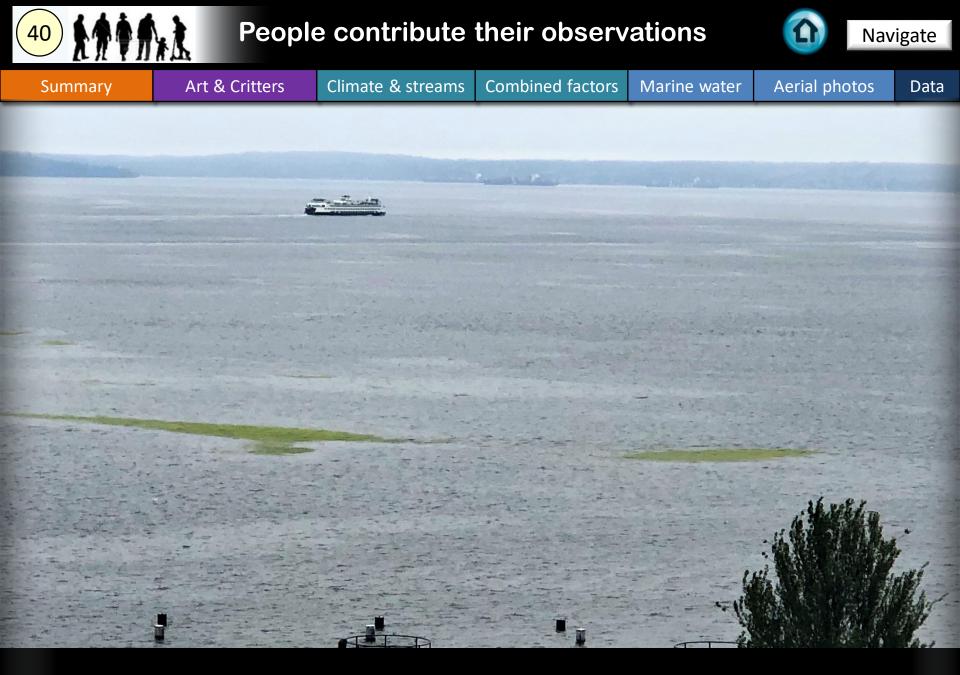
Data



Julia Boss, 8/11/2021, Shilshole Marina



Grace McKenney, 8/12/2021, green bloom in Bowman Bay

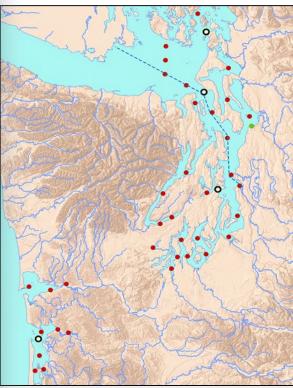


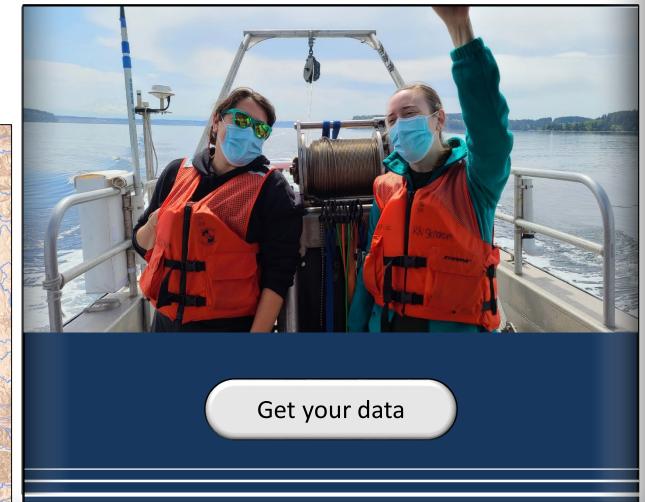
Alysha Dotson, 8/16/2021, macroalgae in Elliott bay



Long-term monitoring data from Puget Sound and coastal bays

- 39 stations sampled monthly
- 16 physical, chemical, biogeochemical parameters
- data from 1999-present





https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/eim/search/SMP/MarineAmbientSearch.aspx?StudyMonitoringProgramUserId=MarineAmbient&StudyMonitoringProgramUserIdSearchType=Equals

Find past editions of EOPS on the next pages



Data

Summary

Climate & streams Con

Combined factors

Marine water

Aerial photos

We have published 94 editions!

Find all previous Eyes Over Puget Sound editions at the end of this document.

Recommended Citation (example for September 2018 edition):

Washington State Department of Ecology. 2018. Eyes Over Puget Sound: Surface Conditions Report, September 17, 2018. Publication No. 18-03-075. Olympia, WA. <u>https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1803075.pdf</u>.



Contact: Dr. Christopher Krembs Christopher.Krembs@ecy.wa.gov Marine Monitoring Unit Environmental Assessment Program Washington State Department of Ecology

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March_16_2020, Publication No. 20-03-071



June_4_2019, Publication No. 19-03-073



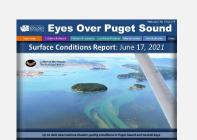
September_8_2021 Publication No. 21-03-075



January_14_2021, Publication No. 21-03-070



Jan_10_2020, Publication No. 20-03-070



June_17_2021 Publication No. 21-03-074



October_26_2020, Publication No. 20-03-073



October_30_2019, Publication No. 19-03-076



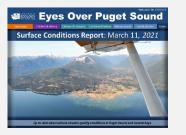
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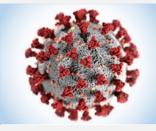
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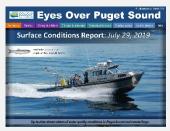
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No coverage due to COVID-19 pandemic from April-September



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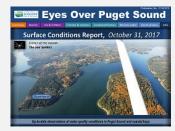
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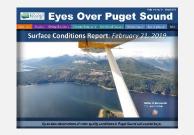
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October_31_2017, Publication No. 17-03-073



November_22_2016, Publication No. 16-03-078



February_21_2019, Publication No. 19-03-071



June_28_2018, Publication No. 18-03-072



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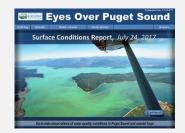
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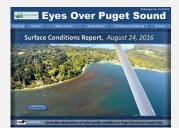
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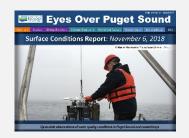
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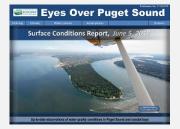
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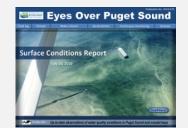
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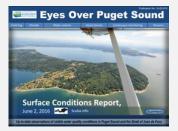
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June_27_2016, Publication No. 16-03-074



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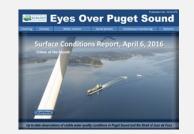
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June_8_2015, Publication No. 15-03-074



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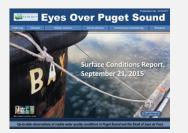
April_6_2016, Publication No. 16-03-072



October_6_2015, Publication No. 15-03-078



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September_21_2015, Publication No. 15-03-077

Eyes Over Puget Sound

Surface Conditions Report

March_24_2015,

Publication No. 15-03-072

Surface Conditions Report

October_29_2014,

Publication No. 14-03-078

October 29, 2014

Eyes Over Puget Sound

March 24, 201



February_8_2016, Publication No. 16-03-070



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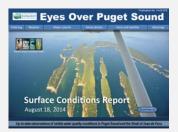
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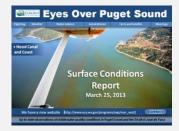
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Mar_25_2013, Publication No. 13-03-072



June_23_2014, Publication No. 14-03-074



December 31 2013, Publication No. 13-03-081



July 15 2013, Publication No. 13-03-076



February_26_2013, Publication No. 13-03-071

Eves Over Puget Sound



May_12_2014, Publication No. 14-03-073



November 21 2013, Publication No. 13-03-080



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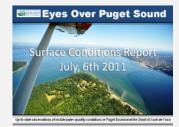
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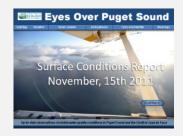
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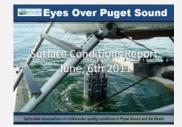
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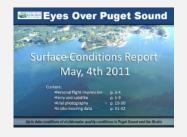
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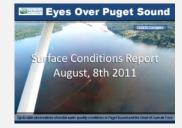
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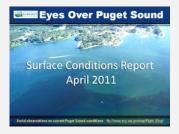
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