

UMS team identifies red tide algae species

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KOTA KINABALU: Marine scientists at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) have identified the species of algae causing red tide in the Sepangar Bay area.

And, according to them, the fish affected by it are not harmful when eaten by humans.

A team of researchers studying the algae bloom found that the red tide, which began last week, had been caused by the presence of *Cochlodinium polikrikoides*.

"This species does not produce harmful toxins but kills fish through asphyxiation or the lack of oxygen due to the gills being clogged by the cells," UMS's Borneo Marine Research Institute said in a statement.

The consumption of fish that died as a result of oxygen deprivation caused by this species of algae does not pose any health hazard for humans, the statement said.

However, it added, the team had also discovered another species that caused red tide - *Gymnodinium catenatum*, which is known to produce toxins that kill fish in Sepangar Bay.