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Activities

Ocean Dead Zones

Name: _____ Date: _____

Ocean dead zone … just the sound of it is scary. In this Planet Diary activity, you'll visit the Gulf of Mexico to find what a dead zone is, how it forms, and how it affects living things in the sea.

Directions

- There's a huge dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Go to What Is the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone? Click What Is It? Answer Workspace question 1.
- Click What Does it Look Like From Space? Use the controls to pause or advance the video. Answer question 2.
- Return to What Is It? and click How Big Is It? Watch the animation, then answer question 3.
- Return to What Is the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone? and click What Causes It? Click the numbers 1 through 4 on the animation to learn how the dead zone forms. Explore the rain cloud and thermometer graphics on the page. Then answer question 4.
- Click the aquarium graphic to get more details on how the dead zone forms. Click the right arrow key to learn more about the role of phosphorus and nitrogen. Answer question 5.
- Click What Does It Affect? at the top of the page. Read the text, then answer the last question.

Workspace

1. What is the Gulf of Mexico dead zone?

2. What do the different colors on the map show?

3. Why did the Gulf of Mexico dead zone get smaller in 1988, but bigger in 1993?

4. Summarize the steps in formation of the Gulf of Mexico dead zone.

5. How do fertilizers contribute to the formation of the dead zone?

6. How does the lack of oxygen affect marine life in the gulf?

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