

TURKEY SAYS IT WILL DEFEAT 'SEA SNOT' OUTBREAK IN MARMARA SEA

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

This aerial photograph taken on May 30, 2021 shows mucilage, a thick, viscous fluid produced by phytoplankton, in Turkey's Marmara Sea at a harbor on the shoreline of Istanbul. | Photo Credit: [AFP](#)

Turkey's environment minister pledged on Sunday to defeat a plague of "sea snot" threatening the Sea of Marmara with a disaster management plan he said would secure its future.

A thick slimy layer of the organic matter, known as marine mucilage, has spread through the sea south of Istanbul, posing a threat to marine life and the fishing industry.

Harbours, shorelines and swathes of seawater have been blanketed by the viscous, greyish substance, some of which has also sunk below the waves, suffocating life on the seabed.

Environment Minister Murat Kurum said Turkey planned to designate the entire Sea of Marmara a protected area, reduce pollution and improve treatment of waste water from coastal cities and ships which has helped the sea snot to spread.

He also called on local residents, artists and NGOs to join what he said would be Turkey's biggest maritime clean-up operation, starting on Tuesday.

"Hopefully, together we will protect our Marmara within the framework of a disaster management plan," Kurum said, speaking from a marine research vessel which has been taking samples of the slimy substance. "We will take all the necessary steps within three years and realize the projects that will save not only the present but also the future together."

Kurum said the measures Turkey planned would reduce nitrogen levels in the sea by 40%, a move which he said scientists believed would help restore the waters to their previous state.

Scientists say climate change and pollution have contributed to the proliferation of the organic matter, which contains a wide variety of microorganisms and can flourish when nutrient-rich sewage flows into seawater.

President Tayyip Erdogan blamed the outbreak on untreated water from cities including Istanbul, home to 16 million people, and vowed to "clear our seas from the mucilage scourge".

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