

Hurricane Harvey Impacts on Water Quality and Galveston Bay Dolphins

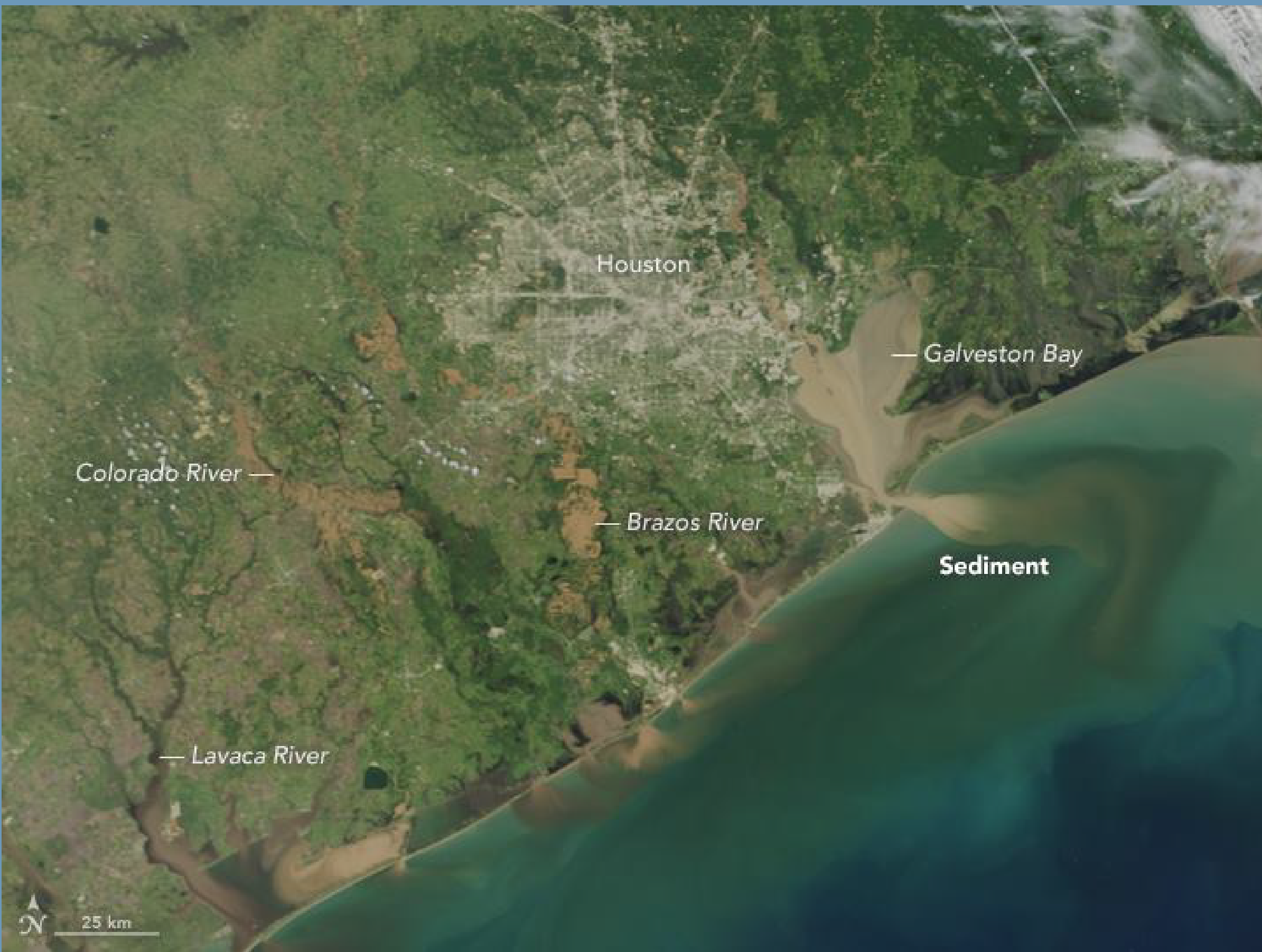


Photo: NASA Satellite of brown rivers and Galveston Bay full of floodwater from Hurricane Harvey.

Harvey is wettest hurricane ever recorded to make landfall in the continental United States. Galveston Bay received an unprecedented pulse of freshwater.



Fecal Bacteria



While it is almost certain bacteria levels were high right after Harvey, in the time our volunteer water monitors have been out taking samples, they are showing low values of bacteria.



Salinity



Galveston Bay's waters are currently much more fresh than they should be. Much of the rain that Harvey dumped on the region is finding its way into Galveston Bay, diluting any saltwater entering from the Gulf.



Turbidity/Debris



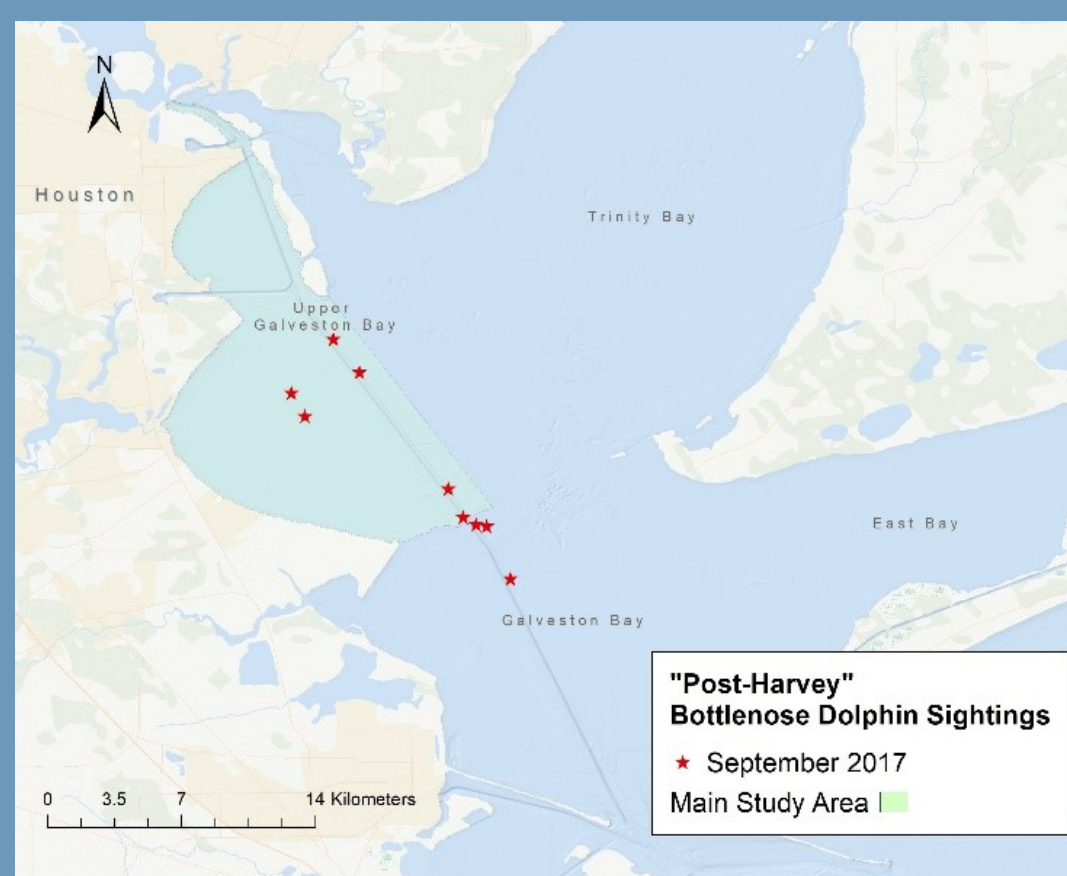
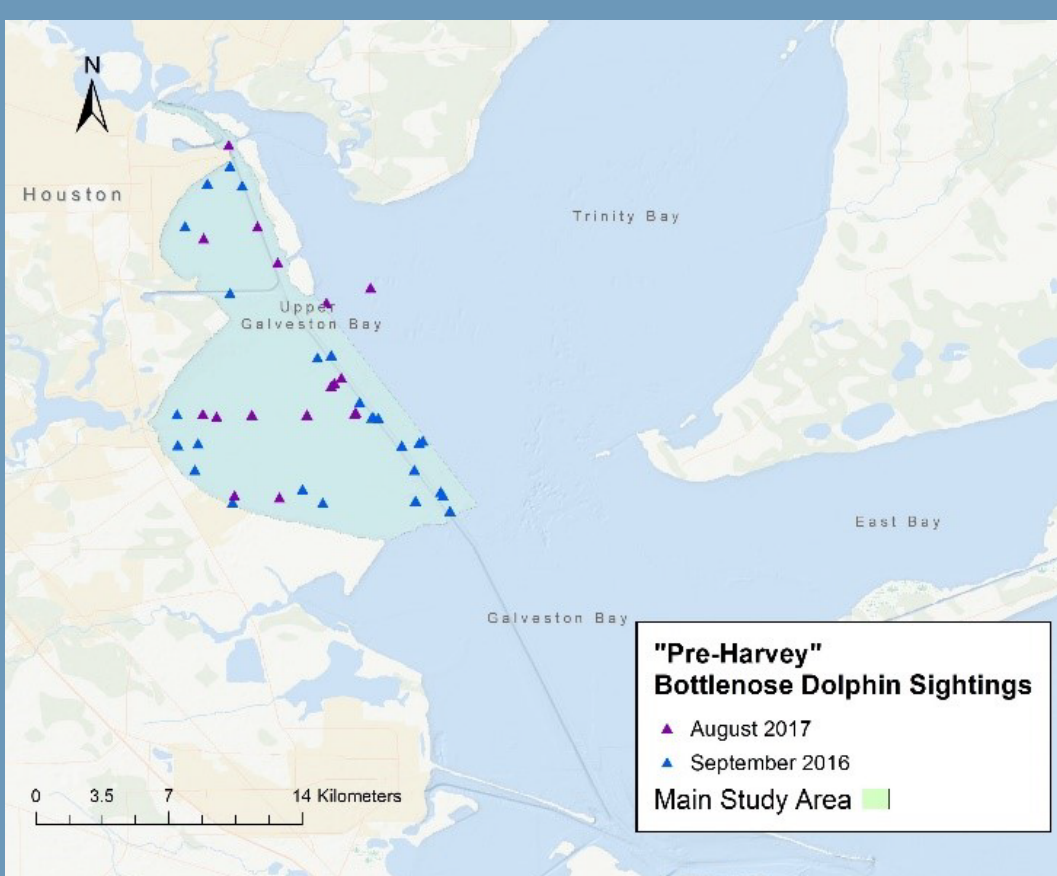
We are finding that an increase in particulate matter in the water is making the water less clear. Water levels are also higher than normal, and of course much more debris has been observed in the water.

One week after Harvey, Galveston Bay Foundation's volunteer water quality monitors mobilized and after testing water around the Bay, found fecal bacteria levels had returned to normal while salinity was very low and turbidity was high.

Salinity was still lower than normal and waters remained turbid at the end of September.



Photo: Skin lesions on bottlenose dolphins in Galveston Bay likely caused by exposure to freshwater runoff after Hurricane Harvey.



Pre-Harvey (left map) and Post Harvey (right map) sightings of Galveston Bay dolphins.

Learn more about the dolphins and the Galveston Bay Dolphin Research and Conservation Program at galvbay.org/dolphin

