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## Dead zone off Louisiana about at 5-year average

By Janet McConnaughey - Associated Press - Monday, August 4, 2014

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - A scientist who's studied the low-oxygen dead zone off Louisiana for 30 years says this year's is about average: the size of Connecticut.

Nancy Rabalais of Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium says it appeared likely to grow, but she doesn't know whether it would have become larger than average.

She says it covered about 5,050 square miles as of Aug. 1. That's triple the 2015 federal target.

Matt Rota of the Gulf Restoration Network says states along the Mississippi River are dragging their feet on reducing the dead zone.

It forms when nitrogen carried by the river feeds huge numbers of plankton. They die and fall to the bottom, where their decomposition uses up oxygen.

Rabalais says there was lots of plankton at the surface and chlorophyll levels there were high.

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