



## The Blooming Baltic Baltic Sea

Cyanobacteria are an ancient type of marine bacteria that, like other phytoplankton, capture and store solar energy through photosynthesis. Some cyanobacteria are toxic to humans and animals. Moreover, large blooms can sometimes cause oxygen-depleted dead zones where other organisms cannot survive.

In August 2015, Landsat 8 captured this false-color view of a large bloom of cyanobacteria swirling in the Baltic Sea. Blooms flourish here during summertime, when there is ample sunlight and high levels of nutrients. Tracks of several ships show up as dark lines where they have cut through the bloom.

Agricultural and industrial runoff from Europe can contribute to excess nutrients in the Baltic Sea. Nutrient loads have been decreasing since 1980, and coastal areas have seen improvement, yet concentrations in the open sea have not changed much.