

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Scores Of Dead Fish Wash Ashore At Some BVI Beaches

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TORTOLA -- Scores of dead fish washed up on the shorelines of Handsome Bay in Virgin Gorda this morning. There was a huge build up of Sargassum seaweed in that area this week.

Someone who posted as Dominic Bufton on BVI Community Board on facebook, had pictures of what he said he found.

Bufton said he found dead fish and sea life the length of the beach and on the water's edge, including baitfish, reef fish, moray eels, lobsters and even a nurse shark. And that same Sargassum is said to have caused the water plant in Handsome Bay to

malfunction.

On Thursday the Ministry of Communications informed residents of Virgin Gorda that the interruption to the water distribution service is being carefully handled by the ministry through the Water and Sewerage Department. The Ministry said a technical team was dispatched to the water plant in Virgin Gorda and reported that the vast amount of seaweed in the bay has caused the plant's desalination process to become dysfunctional as a result of the thick seaweed film.









They said they are working in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labor and a team has been mobilized to remove the seaweed from in the bay.

Meanwhile Acting Chief Conservation and Fisheries Officer Kelvin Penn said he and a team went over to Handsome Bay and they saw several dead fish among the seaweed.

“Its apparently two reasons why this occurred. The Sargassum seaweed which you know is affecting us, it started to decompose and as it decomposes it uses up a lot of oxygen in

the water and since that gets depleted the fishes will die. Also too, the decomposing seaweed releases a lot of gases that would also affect the fish," Penn explained.

Penn said hopefully the situation with the fish would clear itself up over a period of time after the seaweed is removed or if it just decomposes -- probably a few weeks or if the territory gets some rain to wash it away.

He said the situation is not unique to only Handsome Bay as they had calls of dead fish washing ashore in Fish Bay, East End and Sea Cow's bay.

Penn said at the department they are embarking on a clean up effort on these coastlines.