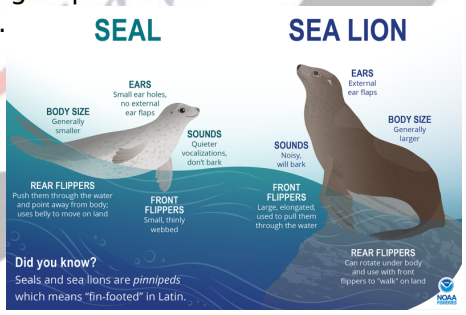
Toxic Bloom Turns Sea Lions Aggressive

Source: DTE

A toxic **algal bloom** **off California's coast** has led to **unprecedented aggression in sea lions**, causing them to attack humans.

- **Domoic acid**, a **neurotoxin produced by the diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia***, is responsible for altering the brain function of sea lions.
    - It causes **stress, muscle spasms, brain damage, and aggressive behavior** in marine mammals.
- **Domoic acid** enters the **food chain**, harming marine life and posing a **deadly risk** to **humans** through **contaminated seafood.**
- Stronger winds (from global warming) cause **upwelling** and bring **nutrient-rich water to the surface**, fueling algal growth.
    - **Pollutant discharge and wildfire runoff** (e.g., from **Los Angeles wildfires**) **add nutrients** that further feed the algae.
- **Sea Lions:** Sea lions (along with Seals and walruses) belong to a group of **marine mammals** called **pinniped group** (fin-footed marine mammals).



- They are found in **large groups and** known for their **loud barking sounds.**
- Spend most of their time in the ocean but come ashore for **resting, mating, and pupping.**
- They live mostly in **Pacific waters**.

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