

## **Ripple Effect # 60 - Fish and Dishwashers**

Ever had fish and dishwashers together in one thought? Probably not. But there is a connection – and it's not a happy one for the fish, that is, if you still use dishwasher detergents that contain phosphates.

The phosphates in detergents used in dishwashers are released into our rivers and lakes. They over fertilize the water, causing excessive plant growth. This in turn reduces oxygen levels in the water, which means trouble for fish and other aquatic life.

Just do the math: Popular dishwasher detergents contain up to 9% phosphates, and one pound of phosphates produces 500 pounds of oxygen-depriving algae bloom!

You do have alternatives. New products for dishwashers with 0 percent phosphates are available and perform well. And some traditional products have lower phosphate levels than others -- it is definitely worth a trip to the label: Over 8% is way too much! You can even do better than 4-5%. Just think of the fish!

This Ripple Effect is brought to you by the Red River Basin Commission.