



Media Release

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
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Blue-green algae blooming in Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake; Caution Urged in Water Contact

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SACRAMENTO – Due to its potential health risks, federal, state and county agencies are urging swimmers, boaters and recreational users to avoid direct contact with or use of waters containing blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), now blooming in a reach of the Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake in Northern California.

Sampling has confirmed the presence of cyanobacteria (*Anabaena spp.*) in the upper Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake approximately between the “No Ski” buoy markers near the middle arm and the buoys at the head of the Pit Arm. Wind and currents can move the bloom in the upper Pit Arm. The presence of toxins has not been confirmed as toxin testing is currently underway. Until toxin testing results are completed, residents and recreational water users of the Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake are urged to use caution and avoid getting in the water or letting dogs swim near these bloom areas.

Blue-green algae can pose health risks, particularly to children and pets. We urge people to choose safe activities when visiting the affected reaches of the Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake and recommend that people and their pets avoid contact with water in locations with blooms, and avoid swallowing or inhaling water spray in an algal bloom area.

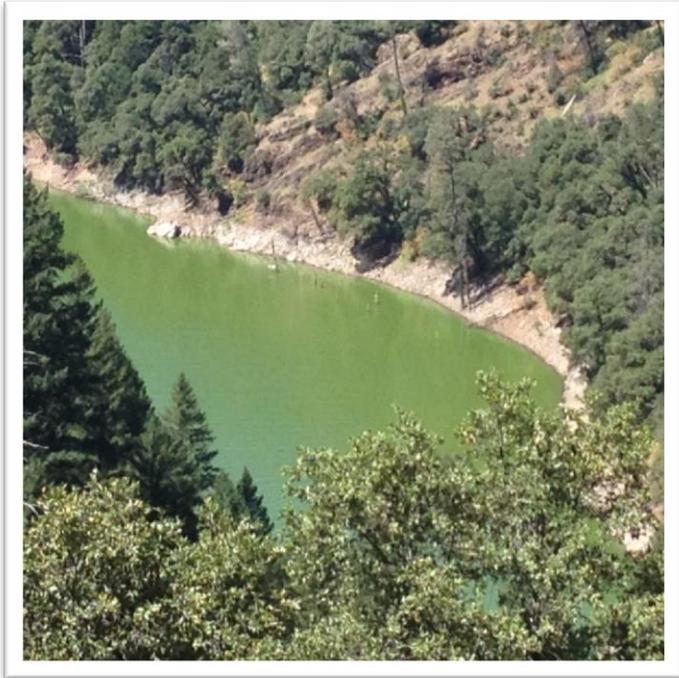
The algal bloom appears as bright green in the water with streaks that look like spilled paint. The blooms can also appear as blue-green, white or brown foam, scum or mats that can float on the water and accumulate along the shore.



Recreational exposure to toxic blue-green algae can cause eye irritation, allergic skin rash, mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhea, and cold and flu-like symptoms. Liver failure, nerve damage and death have occurred in rare situations where large amounts of contaminated water were directly ingested. Pets can be especially susceptible since they tend to drink the water and lick their fur after going in the water.

The [Statewide Guidance on Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Blooms](#) recommends the following for blue-green algae impacted waters:

- Take care that pets and livestock do not drink the water, swim through algae, scums or mats, or lick their fur after going in the water. Rinse pets in clean water to remove algae from fur.
- Avoid wading, swimming, or jet or water skiing in water containing algae blooms or scums or mats.
- Do not drink, cook or wash dishes with untreated surface water from these areas under any circumstances; common water purification techniques (e.g., camping filters, tablets and boiling) do not remove toxins.
- People should not eat mussels or other bivalves collected from these areas. Limit or avoid eating fish from these areas; if fish are consumed, remove guts and liver, and rinse filets in clean drinking water.
- Get medical treatment immediately if you think that you, your pet, or livestock might have been poisoned by blue-green algae toxins. Be sure to alert the medical professional to the possible contact with blue-green algae.



This photo taken on July 5 on the upper Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake shows the algal bloom, bright green in color, hugging the shoreline.



This July 6 picture shows an up-close look at the bloom in the upper Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake.

For more information, please visit:



California Department of Public Health:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/environhealth/water/Pages/Bluegreenalgae.aspx>

State Water Resources Control Board - California CyanoHAB Network:

http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/cyanohab_network/index.html

CA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment: Information on Microcystin

<http://oehha.ca.gov/ecotoxicology/general-info/information-microcystins>

US Environmental Protection Agency: CyanoHAB website

<https://www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanohab>

US Environmental Protection Agency: Anatoxin-a report

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/anatoxin-a-report-2015.pdf>

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