

**From:** lyris@swrcb18.waterboards.ca.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:59 PM  
**To:** Lisa Medina [EH]  
**Subject:** Monitoring Council Releases Harmful Algal Blooms Portal  
**Attachments:** CA HABs Portal Media Release 8-16-16.pdf; CA HABs Portal Fact Sheet 8-16-16.pdf



## California Water Quality Monitoring Council

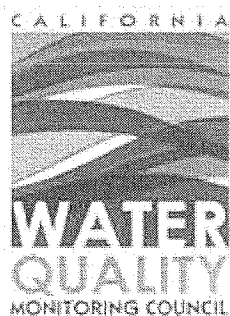
The California Water Quality Monitoring Council has released a new web portal devoted to the question,

### Are harmful algal blooms affecting our waters?

The California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network, an interagency workgroup of the Monitoring Council, in coordination with the State and Regional Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) developed this initial version of the portal. See the attached media release and fact sheet for more information.



- View the California Harmful Algal Blooms Portal from [www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov](http://www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov).

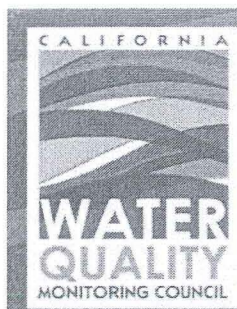


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# Fact Sheet

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCIES | [www.CaWaterQuality.net](http://www.CaWaterQuality.net)

## Are Harmful Algal Blooms Affecting Our Waters?

*Monitoring Council and its California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom Network deliver seventh "My Water Quality" web portal*

### Overview

The California Water Quality Monitoring Council (Monitoring Council) is unveiling its seventh *My Water Quality* web portal to connect decision makers and the public with water quality and ecosystem health information. The theme of this new portal is "Are harmful algal blooms affecting our waters?" View the new portal from California's *My Water Quality* website, [www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov](http://www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov).

The new California Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Portal includes interactive maps and monitoring data that focus on the location, extent, and status of harmful algal blooms in California lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and marine waters. Existing blooms in both freshwaters and marine waters are presented through interactive maps and lists. Tools to identify toxic and non-toxic algae and to report a bloom are featured. Resources for public health officials, drinking water purveyors, lake and reservoir managers, water quality professionals, and the public are made available in a timely and user-friendly manner.

### What are cyanobacteria and harmful algae and why should I be concerned?

At the base of the food chain in fresh, brackish, and marine systems are photosynthetic cyanobacteria and algae. When conditions are optimal, including light and temperature, elevated nutrient levels, and lack of water turbulence, cyanobacteria and some algae can quickly multiply into a harmful algal bloom (HAB). These conditions have been heightened by drought and climate change. Some cyanobacteria and harmful algae can produce toxic chemicals, including cyanotoxins, domoic acid, and other algal toxins. Toxic algal blooms are threatening drinking water supplies and causing wildlife and domestic animal deaths. In humans they can cause a wide range of symptoms, from rashes and allergic reactions to liver damage and even death. HABs present serious challenges to recreational water uses, drinking water providers, and water body managers.

### Why Was This New Tool Developed?

In 2006, the California legislature mandated coordination of water quality monitoring and assessment activities among organizations, both inside and outside California government, and delivery of this information to decision makers and the public via the internet. The Monitoring Council was formed in 2007 by cooperative agreement between the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Natural Resources Agency for this purpose. In 2009, the Monitoring Council released its first two internet portals, *Is it Safe to Swim in Our Waters?* and *Is it Safe to Eat Fish and Shellfish from Our Waters?* Beginning in 2010, portals were added detailing the extent and condition of California's aquatic resources.

The Monitoring Council brings together water quality and ecosystem health information from a variety of organizations with special expertise in harmful algal bloom monitoring and assessment, coordinated through the California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network. State, federal, regional, and tribal agencies and non-governmental organizations have pitched in to answer your water quality questions. A key

player in coordinating monitoring, response, and reporting has been the Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP).

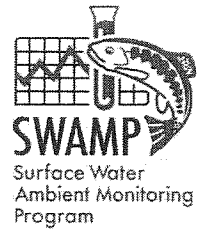
**How Do I Get More Information?**

More information about the Monitoring Council and its expert stakeholder work groups is on the web at [http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\\_council/](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/).

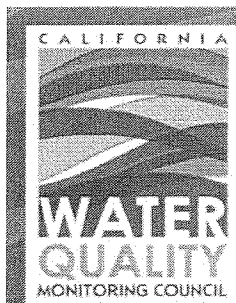
More information on the California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network is at [http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\\_council/cyanohab\\_network/index.html](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/cyanohab_network/index.html).

Subscribe online to receive updates by email regarding activities of the CCHAB Network under the General Interests tab at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/swrcb\\_subscribe.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml).

SWAMP information is online at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/swamp/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/).



The screenshot shows the website interface for California Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). At the top, there is a search bar and navigation tabs for 'Portals', 'About Us', 'Work Groups', and 'HABs Links'. The main content area is titled 'California Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)' and features a map of California with several black dots indicating monitoring locations. Below the map, there are filters for 'Select a Water Board Region' (set to '(All)'), 'Select a Waterbody' (set to '(All)'), and 'Select Dates (Initial Obs.)' (set to 'September 15, 2018 - August 10, 2019'). A 'Date of Initial Observation' range is also shown from 5/15/2015 to 8/10/2018. On the right side, there are two sections: 'News and Announcements' with links for 'Report a Bloom', 'Current Advisories', 'Bulletins & Newsletters', and 'California CyanoHAB Network'; and 'Questions Answered' with a list of topics including 'What are harmful algal blooms?', 'Where are harmful algal blooms occurring?', and 'What can I do about a bloom?'.



# Media Release

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCIES | [www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov](http://www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov)

## Are Harmful Algal Blooms Affecting Our Waters?

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 16, 2016**

**CONTACT:** Jon Marshack  
**Phone:** (916) 341-5514

*"Are harmful algal blooms affecting our waters?"* is one of the many questions that the latest update to California's innovative *My Water Quality* website will answer. The California Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Portal is a new tool that presents information on the health and environmental effects of HABs in California's lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and marine waters. The goal is to provide timely information in an easy-to-understand manner for the public, environmental organizations, and water resource and public health professionals. View the new California Harmful Algal Blooms Portal from the *My Water Quality* website, [www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov](http://www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov).

Harmful algal blooms have been increasingly in the news as of late. Warm temperatures, increased nutrients, and low water flows aggravated by drought conditions and climate change are favoring toxin-producing cyanobacteria and algae; and a number of lakes, reservoirs, and river systems are suffering blooms as a result. Toxic blooms are threatening drinking water supplies and causing wildlife and domestic animal deaths. In humans they can cause a wide range of symptoms, from rashes and allergic reactions to liver damage and even death. Persistent blooms in Clear Lake, the Klamath watershed, Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, East San Francisco Bay Area lakes, Pinto Lake and others present serious challenges to recreational uses, water supply providers, and water body managers.

The California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network was established in 2006 to provide a forum for coordination of HAB response efforts by agencies, organizations, and tribes dealing with these blooms. The CCHAB Network developed and is now updating guidance on voluntary posting of water bodies experiencing blooms, and has taken responsibility for developing a web data portal on the California Water Quality Monitoring Council's *My Water Quality* website. A key partner in this effort is the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) of the State Water Resources Control Board, which is helping to coordinate HABs monitoring and response actions statewide.

"We are pleased to collaborate with our state partners in developing the California Harmful Algal Bloom Portal," said Steven Moore, Member of the State Water Resources Control Board. "Supporting better decision making with timely and accessible information is vital to the protection of public health and California's natural resources."

Formed in 2007 by the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Water Quality Monitoring Council brings together water quality and ecosystem health information from a variety of organizations with special expertise and data relating to swimming safety, the safety of eating fish and shellfish from our waters, aquatic ecosystem health, and now HABs.

California Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Portal:  
[www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/)

More information on the California Water Quality Monitoring Council:  
[www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\\_council/](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/)

More information on the California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network:  
[www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\\_council/cyanohab\\_network/](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/cyanohab_network/)

More information on the Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP):  
[www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/swamp/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/)