

Hunters should take caution near waterbodies with blue-green algae

BISMARCK, N.D. – Waterfowl and upland bird hunting seasons are underway. The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality cautions hunters to watch for potentially toxic blue-green algae in wetlands and lakes while in the field this fall. Blue-green algae can produce cyanotoxins, which if ingested, can cause severe health effects in both dogs and humans. Common side effects for humans exposed to water containing cyanotoxins (produced by blue-green algae) include diarrhea and vomiting, numb lips, tingling fingers and toes, dizziness, rashes, hives, and skin blisters. Canine deaths, seizures, vomiting, and skin irritation have all been linked to these blooms. There are no known antidotes for cyanotoxins.

Know it. Blue-green algae can take many different forms. Be on the lookout for algae with the appearance of grass clippings floating in the water, clumps/puffballs or green cottage cheese. It can also make the water appear like spilled green paint or green pea soup and is commonly bright green or turquoise in color.

Avoid it.

- Respect advisories and warnings announced by Environmental Quality. All water advisories and warnings are posted on our Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Story Map at www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS.
- Do not let pets swim in or drink from waters you suspect blue-green algae is present. Carry plenty of fresh water for you and your hunting dog.
- If you or your hunting dog accidentally swims in water that might have a blue-green algal bloom, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.

Report it. Report suspected blue-green algae blooms to Environmental Quality at 701-328-5210 or by clicking the “Report a Bloom Here!” button on our HABs Story Map. Because it can take time to receive laboratory test results, we urge people to be cautious and avoid waters that look discolored, scummy, or have a foul odor.

Enjoy a safe and successful hunt and *when in doubt, stay out.*

For more information contact:

Aaron Larsen, Division of Water Quality
4201 Normandy Street | Bismarck, ND 58503-1324
PHONE: 701-328-5230 | EMAIL: allarsen@nd.gov | www.deq.nd.gov