

NEWS | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | October 1, 2026

Hunters should use 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 reminds 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 people.

Common side effects for humans exposed to water containing cyanotoxins 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.

- Help pets avoid swimming in or drinking water suspected of having blue-green algae.
- 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.

Environmental Quality's routine harmful algal bloom monitoring for the 2026 recreational season, May 1 through Sept. 30, has concluded. Final waterbody statuses for the season are available on the Harmful Algal Blooms Story Map. Because blooms can develop between monitoring events or after seasonal monitoring ends, hunters should continue watching for signs of blue-green algae.

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

For more information contact:

Brian Houle, Division of Water Quality
4201 Normandy Street | Bismarck, ND 58503-1324
PHONE: (701) 328-5193 | EMAIL: [bhoul@nd.gov](mailto:bhoule@nd.gov) | www.deq.nd.gov