



News Advisory

Harmful Algal Bloom Detected at the East Fork of the Russian River; Caution Urged in Water Contact

For Immediate Release: August 30, 2024

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and Mendocino County advise caution for anyone who fishes, or swims in the East Fork of the Russian River (Mendocino County) as potentially toxic algal mats were recently discovered in the river. Because children and dogs are most susceptible to serious health impacts, it is recommended that they avoid touching any suspicious-looking algal material found in the water or along riverbanks.

August 9, 2024 Water Board staff observed benthic mats at the East Fork of the Russian River. These mats may detach and become stranded on banks. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board in coordination with State Parks is posting "[Toxic Algae Alert](#)" signage at the Standish-Hickey Recreation Area based on statewide guidance. Recreational users are urged to be alert when recreating in the water. The North Coast Regional Water Boards will provide regular updates to inform the community when postings are removed on the [California HAB Reports Web Map](#).

While harmful algal blooms are caused by algal or cyanobacteria that grow floating in the water, some algae or cyanobacteria grow attached to the bottom surface of waterways and can form algal mats. If you see algal mats the recommendation is for children, dogs, and adults to not touch or inadvertently ingest any algal mat material in the water or found stranded on the riverbanks. In addition, dogs should not drink water directly from the rivers. If your dog is exposed, please wash them immediately. These recommendations are based on the potential health risks posed by the toxins that can be produced by algal organisms, commonly cyanobacteria, that can form algal mats. The potentially toxic algal mats can be found either attached to the bottom, floating in the water, or stranded on the riverbank. The appearance of algal mats ranges from bright to dull-green, orange, brown, and maroon material. In summary, when in doubt avoid touching algal mats.

The Water Boards recommend that people practice [Healthy Water Habits](#) while enjoying the outdoors this summer at your local lake, river or stream:

- Heed all instructions on posted advisories if present
- Avoid algae and scum in the water and on the shore
- Keep an eye on children and pets



- If you think a harmful algal bloom or toxic algal mats are present, do not let pets and other animals go into or drink the water or eat scum/algal mats on the shore
- Don't drink the water or use it for cooking
- Wash yourself, your family and your pets with clean water after water play
- If you catch fish, throw away guts and clean fillets with tap water or bottled water before cooking
- Avoid eating shellfish if you think a harmful algal bloom is present

Get medical treatment immediately if you think that you, your pet, or livestock has gotten sick after going in the water or incidentally ingesting the mat material. Be sure to alert the medical professional to the possible contact with cyanobacteria. Also, make sure to contact the local county public health department.

To report a bloom, do one of the following:

- Fill out the bloom [Report Form](#) on the portal
- Email: CyanoHAB.Reports@waterboards.ca.gov
- Call the HABs hotline: 1-844-729-6466 (toll free)
- Contact your County Public Health Office

For more information about HABs, please visit:

[California Harmful Algal Blooms Portal](#)