



Media Release

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCIES | www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov

Are Harmful Algal Blooms Affecting Our Waters?

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“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.

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/

More information on the California Water Quality Monitoring Council:

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/

More information on the Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP):

www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/