



# Media Release

## Harmful Algal Bloom Confirmed in Black Butte Lake *Public Urged to Exercise Caution*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 13, 2019**

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**SACRAMENTO** – Due to a cyanobacteria bloom occurrence in Black Butte Lake in Tehama and Glenn Counties, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are urging boaters, dog owners, and other recreational users to exercise caution and observe signage that warns visitors to avoid active algal blooms.

Water samples collected by the state confirmed the presence of the harmful algal blooms (HABs) at the Buckhorn Day Use Area, the Orland Butte Campground Boat Ramp, the Eagle Pass Day Use Area, the “bowl” area near the dam, and from the Borrow Pond located on the north east side of the lake. Since the concentration of cyanobacteria can vary at different locations and time of the day, the advisory extends throughout [the lake](#).

Algae and cyanobacteria, the organisms that cause HABs, have existed for billions of years as essential components of freshwater ecosystems. But when certain conditions favor their growth - warm weather, stagnant water flows, excessive nutrient inputs – they can multiply rapidly, creating the harmful blooms.

Cyanobacteria can produce toxins that have the potential to harm people, pets, wildlife, and livestock. Dogs and children are most likely to be affected by HABs because of their smaller size, increased potential to swallow water and algal material, and tendency to stay in the water longer. Exposure to cyanobacteria and associated toxins can cause eye irritation, skin rash, mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhea and cold or flu-like symptoms. Liver failure, nerve damage and death have occurred in rare situations where large amounts of cyanobacteria-laden water were directly ingested. More information about human health impacts can be found on the <https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/>

The crucial first step to staying safe during an outing on or near a waterway is to [distinguish cyanobacteria from other algae and non-toxic water plants](#). HABs can be a variety of colors such as green, white, red or brown and may look like paint floating on the water. (Figure 1) Not all HABs will appear on the water’s surface. Some form mats at the bottom of a water body (such as in wadeable rivers and near shorelines), and others float at various depths.

**The California Water Boards recommend that people enjoying the outdoors this summer at lakes, rivers or streams practice [healthy water habits](#):**

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



- If you think a HAB is present, do not let pets and other animals go into or drink the water, or eat scum/algal accumulations 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 HAB is present

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

**People can help prevent blooms in our waters by taking the following measures:**

- Properly maintaining septic systems
- Using phosphate-free dishwasher detergent
- Being conservative with use of water, fertilizers and pesticides on lawns, gardens or small farms
- Collecting pet waste
- Planting or maintaining native vegetation around the water's edge

**To report a bloom, do one of the following:**

- Fill out the Bloom Report form on the HABs Portal:  
<https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/bloomreport.html>
- Email: [CyanoHAB.reports@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto: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](#)

California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom ([CCHAB](#)) Network:

California Department of Public Health [Resource Page](#)

Black Butte Lake and dam is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The lake provides multiple recreational areas for boating, swimming, fishing, hiking and camping. Water released from the dam is sent downstream to the lower Stony Creek and to the Orland Unit Water Users Association, which provides water to downstream agricultural users in Tehama and Glenn counties. Black Butte Lake is not used for drinking water supply.

The U.S. Army Corps Black Butte Lake Park Manager has posted Blue-Green Algae Watch signs at the entry points to the recreational areas, including the Borrow Pond to notify recreational users of the bloom. Contact the Black Butte Lake Park Office at (530) 865-4781 for more information on current site conditions.

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