



Hello, Summer!

In these especially uncertain times where we might find ourselves relying more heavily on virtual communication, being outside and by the lake is an opportunity to take a step back and enjoy the warm, summer days. We must still take necessary precautions, however, for summer weather also brings about harmful algal blooms.

What is a harmful algal bloom (HAB)?

HABs occur when cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae, multiply rapidly. Cyanobacteria are naturally present in low-numbers and are an important part of freshwater ecosystems, as they contain chlorophyll and are, therefore, capable of photosynthesis. However, under certain conditions, such as warm temperatures, high sunlight intensity, calm water, and high nutrient concentrations, cyanobacteria have the potential to grow rapidly in number. The nutrients that contribute to HABs are nitrogen and phosphorus, predominantly found in animal manure and chemical fertilizers. Cyanobacterial HABs are most commonly found in closed bodies of water, but may also be found in streams and rivers.

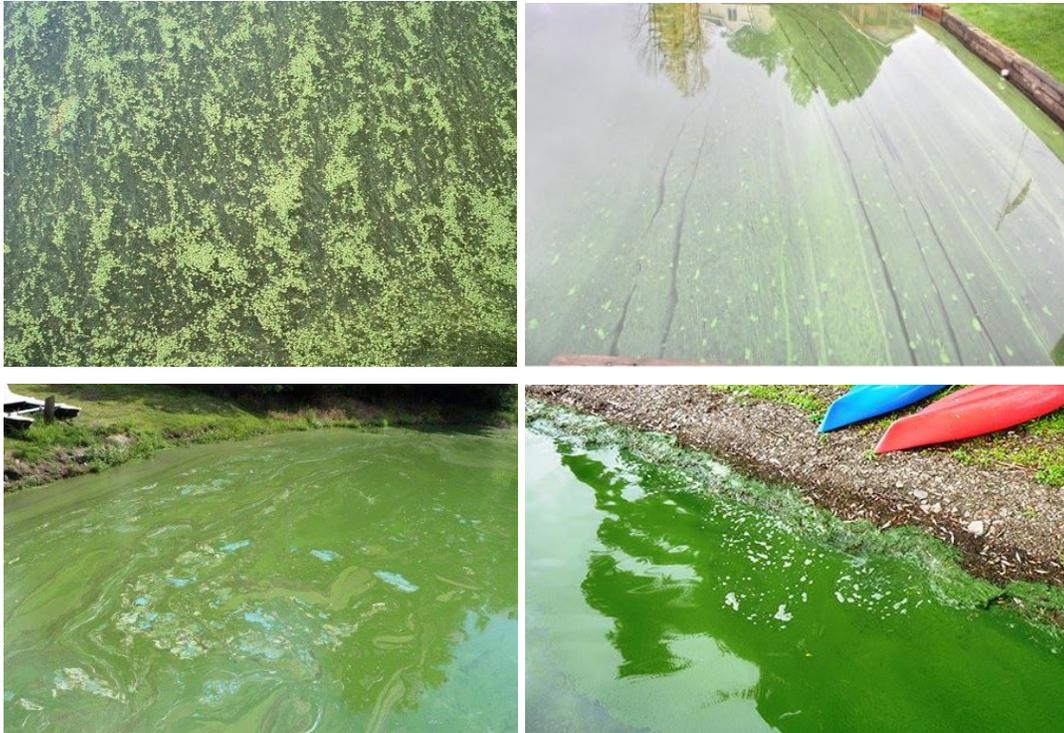
HABs are dangerous because certain taxa of cyanobacteria produce toxins, called cyanotoxins, that are harmful to humans, other mammals, aquatic species, and birds through ingestion, inhalation, or skin contact. Symptoms from contact with cyanotoxins include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin, eye or throat irritation, breathing difficulties, and allergic reactions.

If you think you have had contact with a HAB and/or experience any of the symptoms listed above, rinse your skin immediately with clean water and seek medical attention.

What does a HAB look like?

HABs have a variety of appearances and are commonly described as looking like scattered green dots, spilled paint, or linear green streaks. It can be difficult to distinguish HABs from non-toxic blooms—HABs are often mistaken for filamentous green algae, duckweed, and pollen.

Therefore, it is recommended to avoid any floating scum or discolored water for risk that it is a HAB. Below are images provided by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) of confirmed HABs.



Cayuga Lake HABs Monitoring Program

The HABs monitoring program is run by the Community Science Institute (CSI), the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (CLWN) and Discover Cayuga Lake (DCL) to inform residents and visitors of HAB occurrences and to collect further information to improve future responses. This is not possible without the HABs Harrier volunteers that monitor the shorelines of Cayuga Lake on a weekly basis. If the volunteers are suspicious of a bloom, a water sample is collected and sent to the CSI lab for testing. What is most unique about the Cayuga Lake HABs monitoring program compared to that of other nearby lakes is that we have a certified local lab. This enables the public to receive the results of the sample analyses within 24-72 hours that are posted on CSI's HABs Reporting Page. This year's monitoring season begins on June 29th and is expected to end September 30th.

Reporting a HAB

If you observe a suspicious HAB, avoid it and report it! Email habshotline@gmail.com with the location of the bloom, the date and time, and two pictures. If possible, include the GPS

coordinates of its location using the Compass app or Google Maps on smartphones. Otherwise, an address or nearby landmark will do the job! You may also call CSI at (607) 257-6606.

Stay Informed!

Before heading on the lake, you can view the interactive map regularly updated by CSI that reports all identified HABs on Cayuga Lake [here](#). The DEC provides a similar interactive map of current HABs across New York State that you can open [here](#). You may also call your local park office on the most up-to-date water quality information (see below).

[Taughannock Falls State Park](#)

(607) 387-6739

[Cayuga Lake State Park](#)

(315) 568-5163

[Long Point State Park](#)

(315) 364- 5637 or (315) 497-0130

[Lansing Myers Park](#)

(607) 533-7388 ext. 17

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The Cayuga Lake HABs Monitoring Program is a collaborative effort led by a local consortium of three nonprofits: the Community Science Institute (CSI), the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (CLWN), and Discover Cayuga Lake (DCL), working in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the State University of New York Environmental School of Forestry (SUNY-ESF).

Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

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Discover Cayuga Lake

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