

## What Does The Corps Do?

- Monitors Corps' reservoirs and beaches in Iowa, from May to September.
- Gathers information on variability and impacts.
- Follows State or Corps HAB Guidelines.
- Iowa:  
**Caution** = bloom, no toxin info  
**Warning** = toxins above threshold

### Notice

#### Harmful Algae Is Present

Concentration of toxins produced by blue-green algae currently exceed acceptable guidelines for recreational use.

Swimming is strongly discouraged. Do not drink lake water. Avoid areas of concentrated algae.

## What Can You Do?

- Follow instructions found on posted signs.
- Avoid contact with any questionable waters.
- Do not let pets drink from any waters with a posted advisory.
- Seek medical attention if anyone becomes ill after swimming.
- Report any possible HAB sightings or fish kills.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!**

To report an algal bloom  
please call  
Iowa Department of  
Public Health  
(800) 972-2026

### Additional HAB Resources

Iowa Department of Public Health:  
<https://idph.iowa.gov/Environmental-Health-Services/Reportable-Conditions/Harmful-Algal-Blooms>

Center for Disease Control and  
Prevention:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/habs/index.html>

Environmental Protection Agency:  
<https://www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanobacterial-harmful-algal-blooms-water>

# Harmful Algal Blooms (HABS)



**WHAT ARE THEY?  
WHAT DO I NEED  
TO KNOW?**



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Rock Island District

## What are HABs?

Harmful algal blooms or HABs are overgrowths of algae or simple photosynthetic organisms in fresh and salt water. They are known as red tides, blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, and cause major environmental problems in all 50 states. Some produce dangerous toxins, but even nontoxic blooms hurt the environment and local economies.

## What are the effects of HABs?

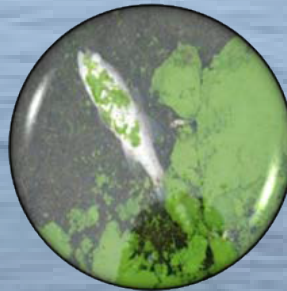
- A small number of algae can produce a powerful toxin that can cause illness in humans and sicken or kill animals.
  - Rashes and allergic type reactions;
  - Stomach and liver illness, respiratory problems, or neurological affects;
  - Illness in pets and livestock.
- When large amounts of algae die and start to decompose they create dead zones in the water where the oxygen is depleted.
- Can increase the treatment cost for drinking water.

## Avoid water that:

**Smells Bad**



**Is Discolored**



**Has Dead Fish**

**If an unknown illness occurs after water contact seek medical attention!**

## How to Identify HABs

Algal blooms look like foam, scum, or mats floating on the top of the water.

It may look like a paint is coating the water and cause it to be different colors such as blue, green, brown, yellow, orange, and red.

Organisms can give off a bad odor when they decompose.

Cyanobacteria or blue-green algae are most common in this area.

They are more common in slow moving, nutrient rich water.

**Not *all* scums are harmful.  
Healthy rivers and lakes produce many types of vegetation and algae that are beneficial.  
But always use caution.**