

Tiny Organisms Create Huge Problems



Dr. Barry H Rosen, USGS

A microscopic look at a harmful *Gloeotrichia echinulata* colony from Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon.

What are the Effects?

HABs can be toxic to people, pets, plants, and wildlife. They can increase the cost of treating drinking water as well as negatively impact industries that rely on clean water supplies.



U.S. EPA

An EPA diver samples water from the Mississippi River near Phillips, Mississippi, in 2011.



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Harmful algal blooms in Milford Lake, Kansas, in July 2016.



Dr. Jennifer L. Graham, USGS

Algae are simple single-celled photosynthetic organisms. Under the right conditions, some algae bloom, or grow out of control. These blooms can contaminate drinking water and become toxic to people and wildlife.

What Causes HABs?

Harmful algal blooms are an environmental problem in every U.S. state. They thrive in slow-moving waters where ample sunlight and excess nutrients can fuel growth. Harmful algal blooms can be green, blue, brown, or red, and they can make water look scummy and smell quite foul. Excess nutrients--nitrogen and phosphorous--are often caused by human activity. Examples of nutrient pollution include industrial and agricultural runoff as well as residential sources such as overfertilized lawns and improperly disposed pet waste.

Get Involved!

You can help stem the growth of harmful algal blooms. Report HABs to state authorities. Take safeguards at home: properly dispose of pet waste, avoid over-fertilizing and over-watering your lawn, and properly use and dispose of laundry, dish, and car wash soaps.



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