

## Sunraysia Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

14 January 2019

### **Red Alert extended in the Murray River for the Mildura weir pool and Wentworth weir pool.**

A Red Alert level warning (high alert) for blue-green algae has been extended for the Murray River at the Mildura weir pool from the Lock 11 to Karadoc and at the Wentworth weir pool from Yelta to Lock 11 including Wentworth, in the Lower Murray Region. Environmental conditions are currently well suited to algal growth due to high temperatures in the river.

A Red Alert level warning indicates that people should not undertake recreational activities where they may be coming into direct contact with the water such as swimming. Contact with the water may also pose a threat to livestock and pets.

People are advised not to enter the water, not to drink untreated water or bathe in water drawn from the river while this red alert level warning is in place. Town treated water supplies remain unaffected and safe to drink.

Warning signs are being positioned at key recreational areas and will remain in place while high levels of blue-green algae are present. However, due to the expanse of the bloom it is impracticable to erect warning signs at every public access point.

Livestock owners are reminded to continue to check stock water supplies for blue-green algae and to remove stock from river foreshores where surface scum is visible or blue-green algae are suspected.

If it is not feasible to relocate stock, it is suggested that where stock water is piped, foot valves or inlet pipes be moved as far down under the water surface as possible, where concentrations tend to be lower, as this may reduce the level of algae pumped through to stock troughs.

Any fish caught should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption.

Blue-green algae usually appear as green paint-like scums on the water, near the edges, or as greenish clumps throughout the water. It makes the water appear dirty, green or discoloured and generally has a strong musty or earthy odour.

The species of blue-green algae identified are potentially toxic and may cause gastroenteritis in humans if consumed and skin and eye irritations after contact. Boiling the water does not remove algal toxins.

Blue-green algae occur naturally and can reproduce quickly in favourable conditions where there is still or slow-flowing water, abundant sunlight and sufficient levels of nutrients. It is not possible to predict how long the algae will remain at high levels. Regular monitoring will continue until the high levels of algae dissipate.

People who believe they may have been affected by blue-green algae are advised to seek medical advice.

Updates about blue-green algae blooms and red level warning areas can be obtained by calling **1800 999 457** or visiting – <http://www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/algae>

Information for landholders regarding stock and crops can be found here:

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/irrigation/quality/pubs-and-info/blue-green-algae>

Information on health impacts can be found here:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Pages/water-recreational.aspx>

**ENDS**