



June 26, 2015

Contact:

Doug Carlson (916) 653-5114; Mobile (916) 335-2299
Information Officer

Public Urged To Avoid Large Algal Bloom in Pyramid Lake *Reduced Water Flows Are Conducive to Periodic Blooms*

SACRAMENTO – California’s four-year drought has reduced the amount of water flowing through the State Water Project and into bodies of water along the project, including reservoirs and lakes frequented by the public. As a consequence, a large algal bloom has developed in Pyramid Lake, and the public is advised to avoid body contact with algal scum or visible blooms and take precautions during recreation at the lake.

Despite Pyramid Lake’s relatively high current storage of 167,201 acre-feet (about 92 percent of capacity), little water is flowing in or out. The absence of appreciable in-flows results in relatively calm conditions in the lake.

Sunlight, warm temperatures, nutrients in the water and calm conditions contribute to algal blooms, which are considered to be harmful if they produce toxins that can affect people and pets when they contact affected water.

People can be exposed to the toxins when they accidentally ingest water while swimming, waterskiing or boating. The toxins can also be absorbed through the skin while swimming or inhaled if they become aerosolized, such as during water-skiing.

Exposure to high concentrations of these toxins can cause skin rashes, eye, nose, mouth or throat irritation, headache and gastrointestinal upset. Dogs can also become ill if they ingest the water or lick their fur after contacting the affected water.

Activities near the water such as picnicking and hiking are safe. Because these blooms can form and die off fairly rapidly, DWR has increased its monitoring of the water quality in Pyramid Lake throughout the summer recreation season and will update this advisory if conditions change.

The following precautions are based on the *Volunteer Statewide Guidance for Blue-Green Algae Blooms*:

- Avoid water contact, including wading, swimming and skiing, with water that is visibly discolored or contains blooms, algal scums or mats.
- If you or your pets come in contact with the water, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible. Use warm, soapy water where available. Remove clothing to avoid contact with trapped algal cells.
- Always warn young children not to swallow any lake water, whether or not you see signs of algae.

- Avoid boating over mats of algae to prevent accidental inhalation or ingestion of spray.
- If you choose to consume fish caught in the lake, remove the guts and liver and rinse fillets in tap water before eating the fish.

Additional information on harmful algal blooms can be found on the State Water Resources Control Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/bluegreen_algae/

California has been dealing with the effects of drought for four years. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit Drought.CA.Gov. Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

