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Silverwood Lake Algal Bloom at ‘Warning’ Level; No Swimming Allowed, Public Should Avoid Water Contact

Sacramento – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has issued a “warning” advisory for Silverwood Lake’s Sawpit swim beach and Cleghorn swim beach due to the presence of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria). (See Statewide Guidance on Cyanobacteria & Algal Blooms on page 2.)

While the lake remains open to boating, the Sawpit and Cleghorn swim beaches are closed to swimming, and signs have been posted warning the public against swimming at those locations. The public is urged to avoid direct contact with visible algal blooms and mats wherever they occur. Silverwood Lake is in San Bernardino County.

The recommendations are based on the potential health risks from blue-green algae. Water sampled in the Sawpit swim area contained approximately 6.1 micrograms of microcystins per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), a concentration just above the “Warning” action level of 6.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$.

Bloom conditions can change rapidly, and wind and waves may move or concentrate the bloom into different regions of the lake.



The algal bloom can appear as blue-green, white or brown foam, scum or mats that can float on the water’s surface and accumulate along the shoreline and boat ramp area.

Blue-green algae can pose health risks, particularly to children and pets. Visitors to Silverwood Lake are urged to choose safe water activities while recreating there. They should avoid swimming and ingesting the water in the Sawpit beach bloom area and avoid ingesting the water elsewhere in the lake. Pets should be kept away from the water in all areas under advisory.

Recreational exposure to toxic blue-green algae can cause eye irritation, allergic skin rash, mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhea, and cold and flu-like symptoms. Pets can be especially susceptible because they tend to drink while in the water and lick their fur afterwards.

The [Statewide Guidance on Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Blooms](#) recommends the following for waters impacted by blue-green algae:

- Take care that pets and livestock do not drink the water, swim through algae, scums or mats or lick their fur after going in the water. Rinse pets in clean water to remove algae from fur.
- Avoid wading, swimming or jet or water skiing in water containing algae blooms or scums or mats.
- Do not drink, cook or wash dishes with untreated surface water from these areas under any circumstances; common water purification techniques such as camping filters, tablets and boiling do not remove toxins.
- People should not eat mussels or other bivalves collected from these areas. Limit or avoid eating fish from these areas; if fish are consumed, remove the guts and liver, and rinse filets in clean drinking water.
- Get medical treatment immediately if you think that you, your pet or livestock might have been poisoned by blue-green algae toxins. Be sure to alert the medical professional to the possible contact with blue-green algae. Also, make sure to contact the local county public health department.

For more information, please visit:

California Department of Public Health:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/environhealth/water/Pages/Bluegreenalgae.aspx>

State Water Resources Control Board - California CyanoHAB Network:

http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/cyanoHab_network/index.html

CA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment: Information on Microcystin

<http://oehha.ca.gov/ecotoxicology/general-info/information-microcystins>

US Environmental Protection Agency: CyanoHAB website

<https://www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanoHABs>

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Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

