

Lake Hopatcong Harmful Algal Bloom Frequently Asked Questions

Updated July 11, 2019

Q: Who should I contact if I suspect that I, or someone I know is experiencing health effects from the HAB?

A: DEP advises the public to report symptoms to the municipal and county health departments and the State Department of Health. The number for the State Food and Drug Safety Program is 609-826-4935. There are epidemiology representatives available to help.

Q: How often is DEP testing? Where can I find results?

A: DEP is conducting water sampling on Tuesday's and Thursday's and aerial surveillance on Wednesday's. Results can be found at the link below:

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bfbm/cyanoHABevents.html>

Q: How can the bloom be treated?

A: Unfortunately, there is no quick treatment for the bloom. Typical algaecide treatments can cause the cyanobacteria cells to rupture and release toxins to the water.

Q: When will the DEP lift the advisory on Lake Hopatcong?

A: The DEP cannot predict when the advisory will be lifted. HABs have the potential to persist or recede depending on conditions. Based on results presented at the July 8, 2019 Lake Hopatcong Commission meeting, the DEP has indicated that there are currently no data trends that indicate that the bloom is below threshold in any region of the lake.

Q: Is it illegal, or can I be stopped for recreating in or on the lake?

A: No, DEP has issued an advisory against direct bodily contact with the waters of Lake Hopatcong. There is no policing of these activities on the lake.

Q: Will placing my ice retardant system (bubbler or propeller driven) in the water help to aerate the bloom, and will this help improve the water quality on Lake Hopatcong?

A. Princeton Hydro and DEP have addressed this on different occasions. Princeton Hydro indicated that many factors related to each area of the lake would influence if this would be effective. Without knowing these factors and just placing a system in the water you may help to aerate the bloom in the vicinity of your dock, but it might also stir up sediment from the lake bottom. This would stir up nutrients and further fuel the bloom. DEP has advised against use of ice retardant systems to aerate the water.

Q: Has the sediment discharge from Weldon Quarry promoted growth of the harmful algal bloom on Lake Hopatcong?

A: At the July 8, 2019 meeting the DEP provided an update on their investigation on the 2019 Weldon Quarry incident and the 2018 discharge from Valiant Contracting. They indicated that they would also investigate whether the quarry discharge could influence the HAB.

Q: How can we prevent future blooms?

A: Both DEP and Princeton Hydro indicate that the best way to limit future blooms is to limit the amount of nutrients entering Lake Hopatcong. Some ways to accomplish this is through good stormwater management, septic management, ceasing fertilizer use, and picking up after our pets.

Q: Where can I learn more about HAB's?

A: DEP has provided a website where you can find detailed information on HAB's;
<https://www.state.nj.us/dep/hab/>

Q: What independent testing has the Lake Hopatcong Commission conducted?

A: The Lake Hopatcong Commission works with Princeton Hydro to conduct cyanotoxin monitoring twice a year during the swimming season. Sampling occurs in July and August. Results of the July 2019 sampling can be found at the link below;

http://lakehopatcongcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Hopatcong_Cyano_7.5.19_FL.pdf