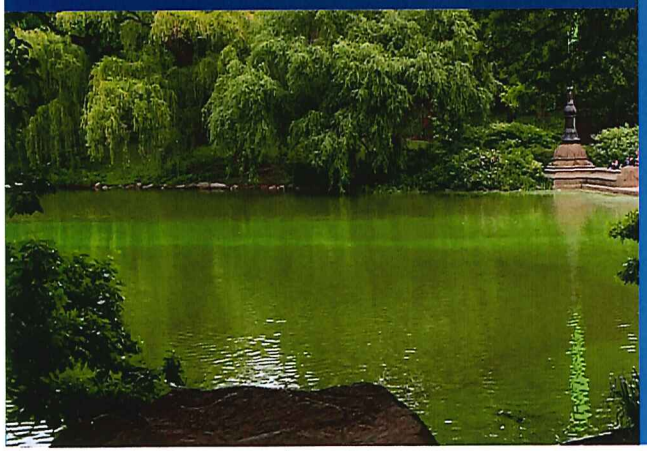
WHAT ARE HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS (HABs)?

Most algae are harmless, but exposure to toxins and other substances produced by *harmful* algal blooms can make people and animals sick. HABs can impact drinking water, and cause discolored water, floating scums, and unpleasant odors that can reduce the value of a lake or river. HABs are sometimes called *blue-green algal blooms* even though they can be various colors.

CAUSES, PREVENTION & RESPONSE

Scientists do not fully understand the exact causes of HABs. They occur most often in waters high in phosphorus and/or nitrogen. New York State has many programs and activities to reduce phosphorus and nitrogen from entering the water from surrounding lands.

DEC's HABs Program, in cooperation with the NYS Department of Health and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, works to identify and respond to HABs. DEC and DOH investigate HABs reports, sample blooms and conduct research to learn more about HABs.



CONTACT & LINKS

For weekly updates about the location and status of HABs from spring through fall, see
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/83310.html
-or-
sign up for DEC's email newsletter **MakingWaves** at
www.dec.ny.gov/about/661.html

DEC:
On.ny.gov/hab

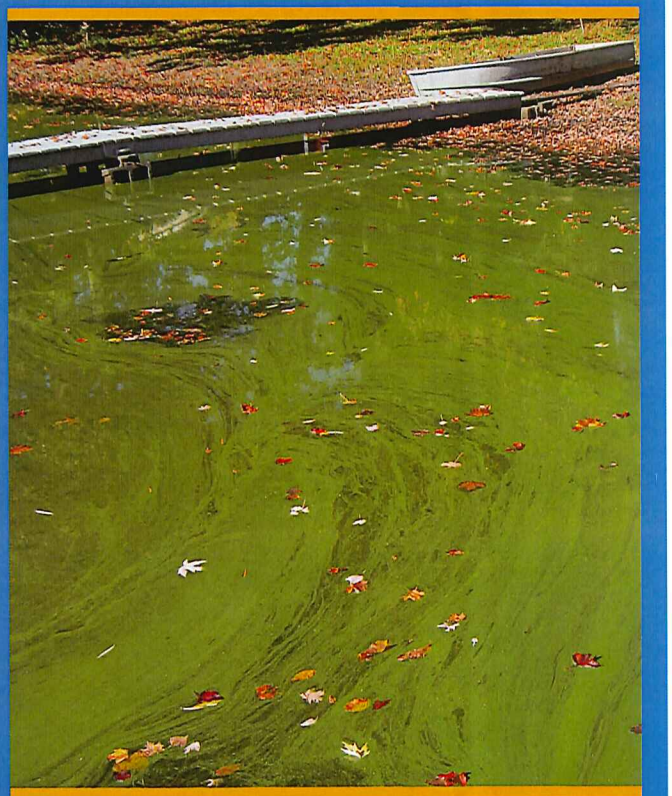
NYSDOH:
www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/bluegreenalgae

EPA:
www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanohabs

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Water
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-3508
(518) 402-8179
HABsInfo@dec.ny.gov

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Department of Environmental Conservation

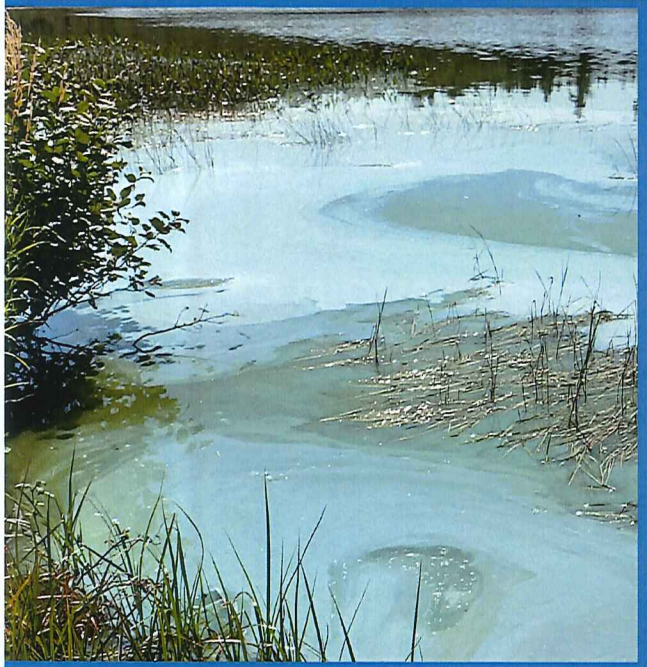
IF YOU SEE A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM **AVOID IT!**



Keep yourself, your family and your pets out of water that is discolored or has scum on the surface.

www.dec.ny.gov

WHAT TO DO



1. AVOID IT!

It can be hard to tell a harmful bloom from a non-harmful algal bloom, so it is best to avoid swimming, boating, fishing or other recreation in discolored water that looks like it might have a bloom. Avoid eating fish caught from areas with a bloom. Never drink, prepare food, cook, or make ice with untreated surface water, even if there is no visible bloom.

IF CONTACT OCCURS

- Rinse thoroughly with clean water.
- Stop using the water.
- Seek medical attention if vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, skin, eye or throat irritation, allergic reactions or breathing difficulties occur.
- Report your symptoms to your local health department or the NYS Department of Health.
- Take care to remove algae from pet fur.

2. REPORT IT!

If you think you see a harmful algal bloom, call

518-402-8179

-or-

fill out a **Suspicious Algal Bloom Report Form** (*available for download at **on.ny.gov/hab***) and submit it with any pictures to

HABsInfo@dec.ny.gov

If you experience any health effects from a HAB, report them to your local health department

-or-

harmfulalgae@health.ny.gov

WHAT DO HABs (USUALLY) LOOK LIKE?

The appearance of HABs can vary. Colors can include shades of green, blue-green, yellow, brown, red, or white.

SPILLED PAINT APPEARANCE

PEA SOUP APPEARANCE

STREAKS ON THE WATER'S SURFACE

FLOATING DOTS OR CLUMPS