Murray and Sunraysia – Algae Alert Status

20 March 2026

This Blue-green algal (BGA) alert report is based on routine monitoring at sites in the Murray & Sunraysia Algae Reporting Area. The sites are monitored by WaterNSW and local water authorities. Satellite imagery may be used to supplement the monitoring data.

Please see Table 1 for all red, amber and green alerts.

Red Alerts

- Lake Menindee Site 19
- Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip
- Lake Menindee Outlet Regulator
- Darling River upstream of Weir 32
- Great Darling Anabranch at Silver City Highway

Amber Alerts

- Lake Hume at Ebden
- Lake Hume at Heywoods Bay near Bethanga
- Lake Hume Dam Resort
- Lake Hume Dam Wall
- Murray River at Union Bridge in Albury
- Murray River at Corowa
- Mulwala Canal Offtake
- Murray River downstream Yarrawonga Weir
- Murray River at Cobram
- Murray River at Tocumwal
- Murray River at Picnic Point
- Murray River at Moama
- Murray River at Euston
- Murray River at Mount Dispersion
- Murray River at Fort Courage
- Murray River Lock 8
- Gulpa Creek at Mathoura
- Edward River at Deniliquin
- Edward River Old Morago
- Darling River at Wilcannia
- Lake Wetherell Sites 1, 2, 3 & 4
- Lake Pamamaroo Inlet
- Lake Pamamaroo Outlet
- Lake Copi Hollow
- Lake Cawndilla Outlet
- Darling River at Tolarno
- Darling River at Pooncarie
- Darling River at Burtundy

General Comments

Bushfire contamination in the Murray River arm and upper Mitta Mitta River arm of Lake Hume continues after recent rainfall in the area mobilised ash, debris and topsoil following the Walwa – Mount Lawson bushfires in early 2026.

Climate Outlooks

For April to June, rainfall is likely to very likely to be below average across the Murray, Sunraysia and Lower Darling regions. Maximum temperatures are very likely to be above average (> 80% chance). There is no clear signal for minimum temperatures across the regions, meaning there is a roughly equal chance of above or below average temperatures. (Source: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM))

Algal Outlook

The risk for blue-green algal growth continues to be high with increased algal activity likely where flow conditions are low or waters are shallow. Recent rainfall across most of the regions may have increased nutrient loads in waterways, leading to an increased risk of algae growth

Satellite image observations start on page 4 of this report.

Table 1: Combined Murray and Sunraysia Alerts.

Site	Description	Latest Sample Date	Cyanobacteria Total Count (cells/mL)	Cyanobacteria Biovolume (mm3/L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm3/L)	Current Status (based on Latest Sample)	Previous Status	Cyanobacteria dominant potentially toxic taxa	Cyanobacteria Comments
MURRAY RIVER SYSTEM										
	Corryong Supply - Raw Water Inlet to Corryong TP (NE Water)	16/03/2026	5,693,348	30.744	0	0.000	RED	GREEN		
	Manus Lake (SVC) Lake pontoon	27/01/2026	1,563	0.003	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
DLH003	Lake Hume, Ebden	2/03/2026	24,802	3.821	12,773	1.120	AMBER	GREEN	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH001	Lake Hume, Heywoods Bay nr Bethanga	2/03/2026	17,391	1.184	10,180	0.722	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH002	Lake Hume, Hume Dam Resort	2/03/2026	18,080	1.949	10,897	1.110	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH004	Lake Hume, Dam Wall	2/03/2026	21,939	2.740	11,990	1.015	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1000	Murray R. Union Bridge Albury	2/03/2026	45,350	0.901	265	0.006	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1001	Murray R. Corowa	2/03/2026	21,300	0.714	4,397	0.421	AMBER	GREEN	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Yarrawonga Weir (outlet) GMW	10/03/2026	47,300	1.365	13850	1.200	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1008	Mulwala Canal Offtake	2/03/2026	87,450	2.240	7,962	0.484	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1007	Murray R. @ below Yarrawonga	2/03/2026	48,290	1.020	4,151	0.253	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1051	Murray R. Cobram (Barooga)	2/03/2026	111,100	2.010	12,193	0.753	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Cobram WTP, raw water (GVW)	11/03/2026	65,296	1.097	11460	0.772	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1013	Murray R. Tocumwal	2/03/2026	89,140	2.680	7,518	0.497	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1052	Murray R. Picnic Point	2/03/2026	192,700	5.900	14,303	0.853	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Barmah WTP raw water (GVW)	11/03/2026	90,334	2.130	25860	1.734	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1050	Murray R. Moama (Echuca)	2/03/2026	107,500	3.800	9,753	0.615	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Torrumbarry Weir GMW	2/03/2026	81,802	0.777	344.000	0.105	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum cf. crassum*	
N1003	Murray R. Barham (Koondrook)	2/03/2026	11,534	0.071	1,274	0.010	GREEN	AMBER	*Geitlerinema splendidum*	Potentially toxigenic
N1054	Murray R. Murray Downs (Swan Hill)	2/03/2026	36,226	0.062	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
	Murray River U/S Woorinen pumps GMW	9/03/2026	126,333	0.670	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1055	Murray R. Tooleybuc (Piangil)	2/03/2026	118,761	0.160	68	0.001	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1064	Lake Benanee Rec Area	4/02/2026	42,053	0.061	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1028	Murray R. Euston (Robinvale)	3/02/2026	30,793	1.118	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1065	Murray R. Mount Dispersion	4/02/2026	174,587	1.052	1,905	0.046	AMBER	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1062	Murray R. Buronga	2/03/2026	59,452	0.094	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
	Merbein (LMW)	16/02/2026	71,372	0.561	800	0.059	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp*	
N1027	414206 - Murray River at Merbein	2/03/2026	56,791	0.103	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1063	Murray R. Curlwaa	2/03/2026	55,562	0.148	663	0.040	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1066	Murray R. Fort Courage	2/03/2026	207,252	0.627	1,939	0.047	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Lock 9 (LMW)	16/02/2026	151,628	4.903	51036	3.768	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp*	
N1077	Murray R. Lock 8	2/02/2026	110,945	5.272	2,654	0.333	AMBER	GREEN	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1078	Lake Victoria Outlet Regulator	2/02/2026	7,608	0.211	1,020	0.123	GREEN	No Alert	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour

Table 1: Continued

Site	Description	Latest Sample Date	Cyanobacteria Total Count (cells/mL)	Cyanobacteria Biovolume (mm3/L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm3/L)	Current Status (based on Latest Sample)	Previous Status	Cyanobacteria dominant potentially toxic taxa	Cyanobacteria Comments
BILLBONG CREEK, EDWARD & WAKOOL RIVERS										
N1020	Billabong Ck. Walbundrie	2/03/2026	12,521	0.016	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1015	Billabong Ck. Jerilderie	2/03/2026	2,483	0.024	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1006	Gulpa Ck. Mathoura	2/03/2026	156,300	2.920	8,030	0.507	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1002	Edward R Deniliquin	2/03/2026	196,300	3.820	4,263	0.241	AMBER	AMBER	*Umezakia ovalisporum*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1053	Edward R. Old Morago	2/03/2026	152,700	3.730	932	0.027	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1005	Edward R. Moulamein	2/03/2026	46,699	0.067	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1010	Wakool R. Wakool-Barham Road	2/03/2026	67,292	0.172	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1004	Wakool R. @ Stoney Crossing	2/03/2026	14,712	0.017	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1009	Wakool R. Kyalite	2/03/2026	5,018	0.003	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
MENINDEE LAKE SYSTEM & LOWER DARLING RIVER										
N1042	Darling River at Wilcannia	3/02/2026	633,196	1.604	9,252	0.340	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1087	Lake Wetherell Site 1	23/02/2026	735,776	1.572	1,582	0.204	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1088	Lake Wetherell Site 2	23/02/2026	478,554	1.241	323	0.041	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1089	Lake Wetherell Site 3	23/02/2026	938,005	2.671	2,836	0.300	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1090	Lake Wetherell Site 4	23/02/2026	413,376	1.026	1,104	0.142	AMBER	GREEN	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1091	Lake Tandure Site 8	23/02/2026	140,340	0.290	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1092	Lake Pamamaroo Inlet (Site 9)	23/02/2026	415,541	0.618	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
N1129	42510013 Centre Pamamaroo (Site 13)	23/02/2026	127,798	0.166	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1093	Lake Pamamaroo Outlet (Site 10)	23/02/2026	412,214	0.595	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1094	Menindee Lakes, Copi Hollow	23/02/2026	374,095	0.651	680	0.081	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1337	Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip	9/03/2026	15,635,750	135.2	63,173	6.888	RED	RED	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1130	Lake Menindee Site 19						RED	RED	*Red Alert raised based on satellite imagery and results of nearby sites. Site has not been sampled due to being inaccessible.*	
N1339	Lake Menindee outlet regulator	9/03/2026	4,409,000	40.329	65,108	7.552	RED	RED	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1128	Lake Cawndilla Site 34 Outlet	23/02/2026	1,110,086	3.320	1,643	0.202	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1095	Darling R. Menindee bhwb pump	24/02/2026	50,095	0.064	136	0.017	GREEN	GREEN	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1086	Darling R u/s Weir 32	9/03/2026	968,810	8.671	5,054	0.466	RED	RED	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1043	Darling R. Tolarno	3/02/2026	393,192	3.360	3,497	0.461	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1040	Darling R. Pooncarie	2/03/2026	585,484	2.379	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
N1041	Darling R. Burtundy	9/03/2026	465,875	1.101	204	0.026	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1074	Darling R. Ellerslie	2/03/2026	48,204	0.249	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1075	Darling R. Tapio	2/03/2026	66,749	0.143	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
GREAT DARLING ANABRANCH										
N1350	Silver City Hwy	9/03/2026	355,206	1.694	5,329	0.600	RED	RED	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour

Satellite imagery

The key to the approximate total algae (blue green and non-blue green) concentrations using the Custom Algae Script can be found in Table 3. The actual values can potentially vary by a significant margin due to the geology of the waterbody, species of algae, turbidity, aquatic plants, time of day of the image capture, aerosols in the atmosphere, etc. This variability is a result of the nature of satellite imagery being a large-scale remote sensing format and is not function of the technology or the script itself. For this reason, these colours and descriptors are not the official ***"Algae Alert Level"*** *but rather provides information on the* ***potential risk on algae formation.***

Table 3: Observed risk levels based on the estimated photosynthetic activity for Custom Algae Script

Map Colour	Risk Level -	Starting concentration guide range	RACC recreational alert values approx. equivalence
Blue	Very low	<0.05 mm3/L	No Alert
Green	Low	0.05 to 0.5 mm3/L	Green
Yellow	Medium	0.5 to 5.0 mm3/L	Amber
Red	High	5.0 to 20.0 mm3/L	Red
Dark red	Extreme	> 20 mm3/L	Red

Observations about the satellite images

Figure 1: The satellite image from March 12 indicates that Hume Dam exhibited mostly very low levels of phytoplankton activity.

Figure 2: The satellite image from March 13 showed mostly moderate to high levels of phytoplankton activity across Menindee Lake and Cawndilla Creek. Lake Cawndilla displayed low to moderate phytoplankton activity, while low levels were observed at Lake Tandure, Pamamaroo, Copi Hollow, and Lake Wetherell (sites 1-4). Weir 32 showed primarily moderate levels of activity.

Figure 3: The satellite image from March 13 of the Murray River near Wentworth indicated very low levels of phytoplankton activity, while the Darling River showed low levels. The Great Darling Anabranch displayed mostly moderate to high levels of phytoplankton activity, and downstream of the confluence with the Murray River showed low levels of activity.

Figure 4: On March 13, Lake Victoria exhibited mostly very low phytoplankton activity, with some potential activity noted near the inflow.

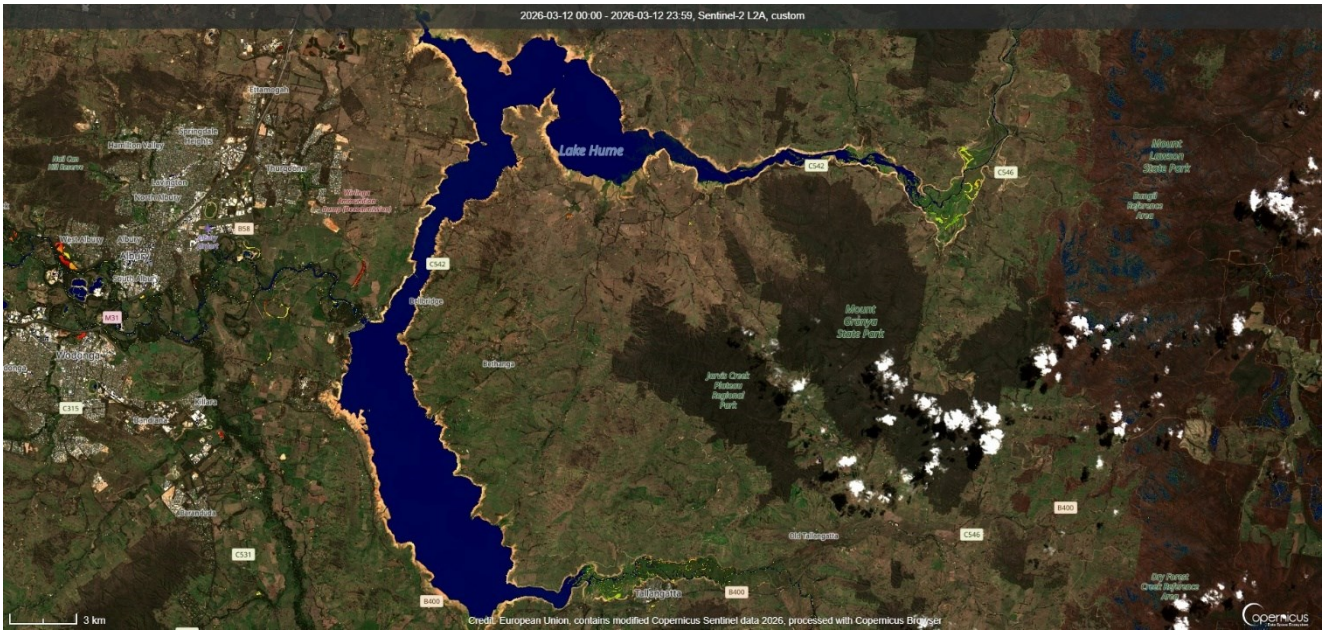

Figure 1: Hume Dam 12/03/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

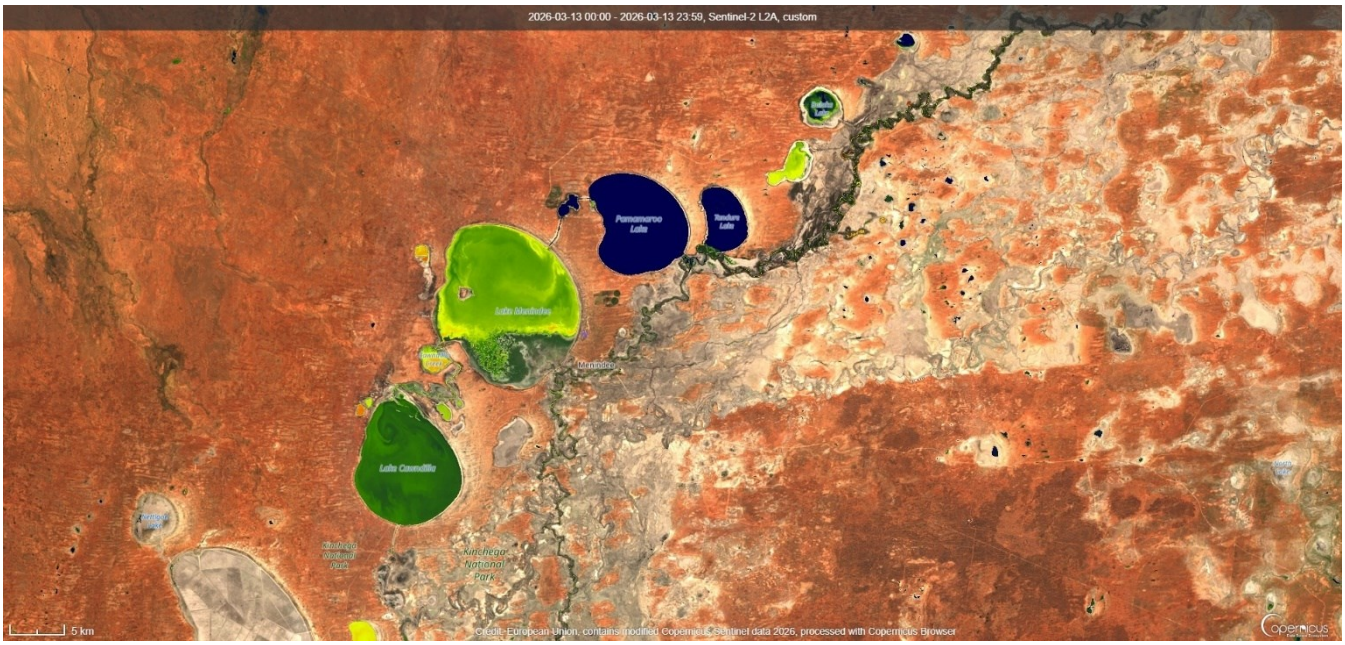

Figure 2: Menindee Lakes 13/03/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW-RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

Figure 3: Murray River near Wentworth, Lower Darling River and Great Darling Anabranch 13/03/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

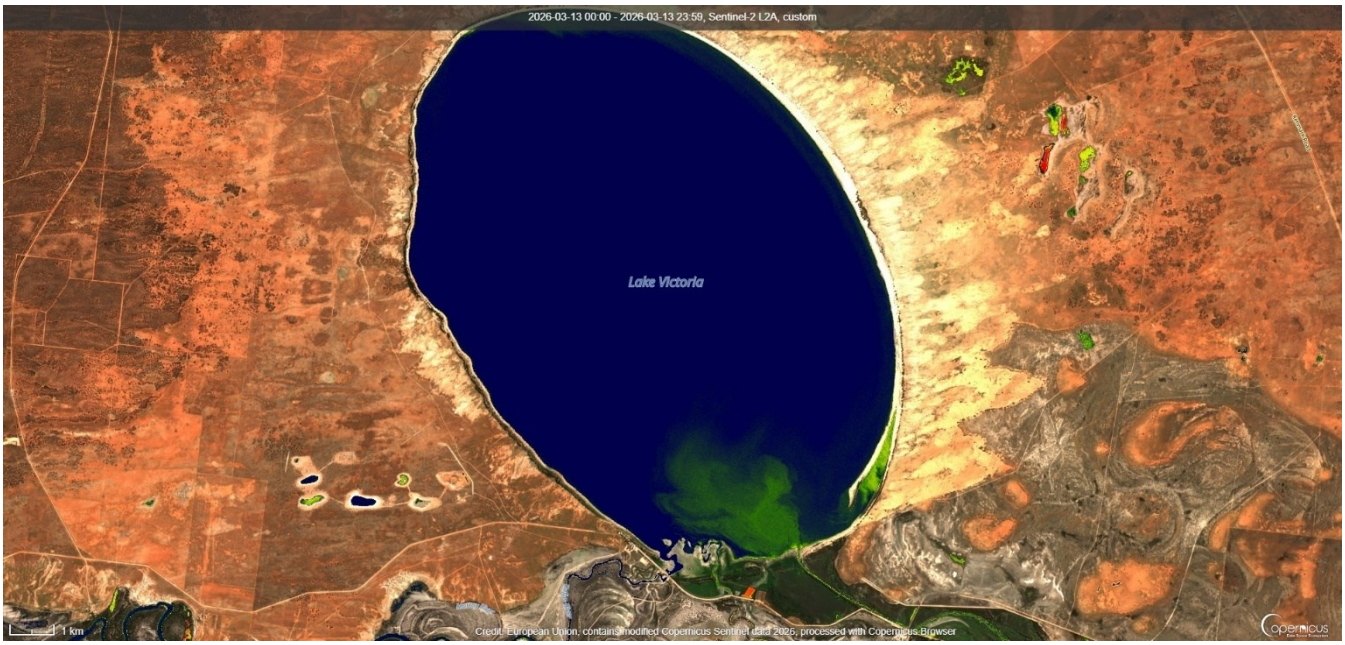

Figure 4: Lake Victoria 13/03/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

Alert Definitions for Recreational Waters

Alert Definitions as specified in The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) *Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water* 2008.

The interim use of these guidelines is endorsed by the Scientific Subcommittee of the NSW Algal Advisory Group.

RED ALERT
These alert levels represent 'bloom' conditions. Water will appear green or discoloured and clumps or scums could be visible. It can also give off a strong musty or organic odour.
Algae may be toxic to humans and animals. Contact with or use of water from red alert areas should be avoided due to the risk of eye and skin irritation. Drinking untreated or boiled water from these supplies can cause stomach upsets. Alternative water supplies should be sought or activated carbon treatment employed to remove toxins. People should not fish when an algal scum is present. Owners should keep dogs away from high alert areas and provide alternative watering points for stock.

AMBER ALERT
Blue-green algae may be multiplying, and the water may have a green tinge and musty or organic taste and odour. The water should be considered as unsuitable for potable use and alternative supplies or prior treatment of raw water for domestic purposes should be considered. The water may also be unsuitable for stock watering. Generally suitable for water sports, however people are advised to exercise caution in these areas, as blue-green algal concentrations can rise to red alert levels quickly under warm, calm weather conditions.

GREEN ALERT
Blue-green algae occur naturally at low numbers. At these concentrations, algae would not normally be visible, however some species may affect taste and odour of water even at low numbers and does not pose any problems for recreational, stock or household use.

Key to Alerts for Recreational Waters

RED Alert ≥ 50 000 cells/mL toxic *M. aeruginosa* OR biovolume equivalent of ≥4 mm^3/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria where a known toxin producer is dominant in the total biovolume OR The total biovolume of all cyanobacteria ≥10 mm^3/L OR Cyanobacterial scums are consistently present	• High levels of Blue Green Algae detected • Indicates "bloom" conditions • Toxicity should be presumed • Water will appear green or brownish and may have a strong musty taste and odour • Surface scums could occur • **Extreme care should be exercised, and contact with the water should be avoided** **Action** • Issue Media Release • Water supply authorities to increase filtering with activated carbon as appropriate • Local authority and health authorities to warn the public that the water body is unsuitable for primary contact recreation
AMBER Alert ≥5 000 to <50 000 cells/mL *M. aeruginosa* OR biovolume equivalent of ≥ 0.4 to < 4 mm^3/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria where known toxin producers are dominant in the total biovolume OR ≥ 0.4 to < 10mm^3/L combined total for all blue-green algae where known toxin producers are not dominant	• Indicates blue-green algae are multiplying • Water may have a green tinge and musty taste and odour **Action** • Water supply authorities to consider filtering with activated carbon • Investigations into the causes of the elevated levels and increased sampling to enable the risks to recreational users to be more accurately assessed.
GREEN Alert > 500 to < 5 000 cells/mL *M. aeruginosa* OR biovolume equivalent of > 0.04 to < 0.4 mm^3/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria	• Low levels of potentially toxic species detected – suggesting base crop of blue green algae may be on the increase **Action** • Continue/increase routine sampling to measure cyanobacterial levels

Livestock Drinking Water Guidelines Based on ARMCANZ (2000), Orr and Schneider (2006) and WQRA (2010)

This guideline should be used when water is used for livestock drinking water purposes.

- If visual scums are present, then a High alert should be declared. This would be applicable for both farm dams and publicly managed water bodies (streams, rivers, etc). Such advice should also be given to farmers who phone the department seeking information on managing blooms in their dams.
- Where blooms dominated by ***Microcystis aeruginosa*** are present, then the ANZECC/ARMCANZ (2000) guideline of 11,500 cells/mL should be used. Excess of this cell count will constitute a High alert.
- Where blooms dominated by ***Dolichospermum circinale*** are present, then the Orr and Schneider (2006) guideline of 25,000 cells/mL should be used. Excess of this cell count will constitute a High alert.
- **Blooms of blue-green algae other** than *M. aeruginosa* and *D. circinale* are also common in NSW. These can be of either known potentially toxic species, or of species not considered to be toxin producers. When these blooms are present, a total blue-green algal biovolume in excess of 6 mm^3/L will constitute a High alert. (These are based on Very High alert recommendations for raw water sourced for potable human supply published by WQRA (2010), in lieu of there being nothing else available).

Further Information and Contacts

Links to websites of VIC and other agencies
Link to Snowy Valleys Council
Link to North East Water
Link to Goulburn-Murray Water blue-green algal alerts
Link to Goulburn Valley Water blue-green algal information
Link to Lower Murray Water blue-green algal alerts
NSW DPI blue-green-algae information for landholders
Manus Lake, at the Pontoon – Snowy Valley Council

Go to the WaterNSW Algal Website
www.waternsw.com.au/algae or at WaterInsights (links below):
Murray regulated river - https://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au/11904-new-south-wales-murray-regulated-river/updates
Lower-Darling regulated river - https://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/updates

Contacts

Asha Kelly (Coordinator)
Asha.Kelly@waternsw.com.au
Mobile: 0476 381 537

Shashika Korotta-Gamage (A/Coordinator)
shashika.korotta-gam@waternsw.com.au