**Harmful algal bloom in XXXXXXXXXXX;
Caution Urged in Water Contact**

**News Release: xxxxxxx, 201x Contact: xxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Sacramento –** xxagency namexxxx is urging boaters and recreational users to avoid direct contact with or use of waters affected by harmful algal blooms (HABs)in xxwater body namexxx in xxxxxxxx County.

The recommendation is based on the potential health risks from toxins produced by cyanobacteria, which is currently blooming in xxwater bodyxx. Algae and cyanobacteria, the organisms that cause HABs, have existed for billions of years as essential components of freshwater ecosystems. But when certain conditions favor their growth - warm temperatures, stagnant water flows, excessive nutrient inputs - they can multiply very rapidly creating “blooms.” These blooms can produce toxins, and taste and odor compounds, that pose health risks to humans and animals. When blooms pose a risk, they are referred to as harmful algal blooms (HABs).

Xxxsentence on where the bloom has been observed in the water bodyxxx. Bloom conditions can change rapidly and wind and waves may move or concentrate the bloom into different regions of the xxwater bodyxx. Xxsentence detailing results of water sampling, whether toxins confirmed or notxxx

(insert map, pictures if available).

xxDescription of water body, who operates itxx. xxThe water body (is/is not) used for drinking water supply, further detail if it isxx. Xx <Caution/Warning/Danger> signs have been posted at these locationsxxx

Cyanotoxins and algal toxins pose risks to the health and safety of people and pets, drinking water, and recreating in water bodies affected by blooms. They can also accumulate in fish and shellfish to levels posing threats to people and wildlife. [Symptoms of HAB-related illness](https://www.cdc.gov/habs/illness-symptoms-freshwater.html) in people and animals are available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and by contacting the California Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222).

Pets, especially dogs, are susceptible to HABs because they swallow more water while swimming and playing in the water. They are also less deterred by green, smelly water that may contain HABs. Animals can experience symptoms within minutes of exposure to the toxins. In the worst cases, animals have died. If your pet experiences these symptoms after exposure, contact your veterinarian immediately.

We urge people to practice [Healthy Water Habits](https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/) when visiting xxxwater bodyxx:

* Heed all instructions on posted advisories if present
* Avoid algae and scum in the water and on the shore
* Keep an eye on children and pets (dogs)
* If you think a HAB is present, do not let pets and other animals go into or drink the water, or eat scum/algal accumulations on the shore
* Don’t drink the water or use it for cooking
* Wash yourself, your family and your pets with clean water after water play
* If you catch fish, throw away guts and clean fillets with tap water or bottled water before cooking
* Avoid eating shellfish if you think a HAB is present

HABs can be found in many California waterbodies and may appear vibrant green to dark green, blue-green, yellow, brown, black, or red in color. Although they can occur anywhere in a body of water, in lakes they tend to be more concentrated in areas where water movement is limited and are downstream of wind and water currents. In rivers they can be found attached to the sediment on the bottom, floating along the shoreline or in backwater eddies. While many blooms statewide do not contain harmful levels of toxins, it is important to stay safe and avoid contact.

People can help prevent blooms in our waters by taking the following measures:

* Properly maintain septic systems
* Use phosphate-free dishwasher detergent
* Be conservative with use of water, fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn, garden or small farm
* Pick up pets’ waste
* Plant or maintain native vegetation around the water’s edge

**For more information, please visit** California Harmful Algal Blooms Portal at:

<http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/>

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