

Algal Alert Bulletin

Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

UPDATE ON THE BLUE-GREEN ALGAE LEVELS IN THE MURRAY RIVER

The Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee (RACC) today issued an update on the section of the Murray River downstream from Hume Dam to Boundary Bend.

Continued monitoring by the NSW Department of Water and Energy has continued to detect high numbers of potentially toxic blue-green algae at most locations along the Murray River.

Acting Murray RACC Chairman Greg Smith said that conditions in the upper parts of the Murray River are much the same as they have been for the past couple of weeks. However conditions in the mid Murray River have improved, with decreases in blue-green algal presence downstream of Echuca.

“The section of river between Torrumbarry Weir and Boundary Bend, including the towns of Barham, Swan Hill and Tooleybuc has been downgraded to the less severe Amber alert level,” Mr Smith said.

At amber alert water is suitable for recreation, but care should still be taken to avoid areas that have surface scum or smell musty.

The Red Level Alert remains in place for the stretch of Murray River from the Hume Dam at Albury to Echuca/Moama.

“This includes, but is not restricted to Hume Reservoir, Lake Mulwala, Corowa, Yarrawonga, Cobram, Tocumwal, Picnic Point, Barmah and Echuca/Moama.” Mr Smith said.

“Gulpa Creek at Mathoura as well as the Edward River from Deniliquin to Moulamein also remain on a Red Level Alert”

Red alert concentrations are now also present in the Mulwala main canal at the off-take from Lake Mulwala, possibly accumulating here after being washed in from Lake Mulwala.

Town water supplies for towns along the Murray River including both Albury City and Wodonga are being treated and are safe for human consumption.

“This Red Level Warning indicates that waters are unsuitable for recreational use or primary contact by domestic users and may also pose a threat to livestock. Residents are advised to avoid contact with the raw water supply,” Mr Smith said.

The species of blue-green algae identified are potentially toxic and may cause gastroenteritis in humans if consumed and skin and eye irritations after contact. Boiling the water does not inactivate algal toxins.

People are advised not to enter the water, and are further advised not to drink untreated water or bathe in water drawn from the river whilst this Red Level Warning is in place.

Livestock owners are reminded to continue to check stock water supplies for blue-green algae and to remove stock from foreshores where surface scum is visible or blue-green algae are suspected.

People should not eat mussels or crayfish from Red Level Warning areas. Any fish caught should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption.

Information updates about blue-green algae blooms and Red Level Warning areas can be obtained from the Regional Algal Coordinating Committee freecall Algal Information Hotline on 1800 999 457.
