



NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release

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The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

NMED warns of algae blooms in Charette, Maloya, Clayton Lakes *NMED encouraging visitors to exercise caution*

COLFAX AND UNION COUNTIES — Visitors to Charette Lake, Clayton Lake, and Lake Maloya in Northern New Mexico are being urged to use caution due to the formation of harmful algae blooms.

Samples collected from the lakes by NMED show harmful algae. NMED is urging visitors to take the following precautions:

- As always, do not drink untreated surface water
- Avoid swimming in algae blooms
- Rinse fish with clean water prior to cooking thoroughly and eat only the fillet portion
- Keep pets and livestock out of the water and rinse them with clean water if contact occurs
- Avoid algae deposited on the shoreline and do not let animals eat it
- Supervise children and pets, as they are more likely to ingest water and algae
- If you suspect an algae-related illness, call the New Mexico Poison Information Center at (800) 222-1222. For illness in animals call (888) 426-4435 or the Pet Poison Helpline at (855) 764-7661

Harmful algae blooms, or HABs, occur when certain algae overgrow in water, posing potential health risk to people and animals. They can appear blue, bright green, brown, or red and resemble scum or floating grass clippings on the water's surface.

While HABs can be dangerous due to the toxins that may be produced by certain algae, it is helpful to view them as being the same as encountering a rattlesnake on a hiking trail. While precautions should be taken to avoid them, it is rarely necessary to close an entire area due to their presence.

HABs and the toxins they can produce are classified as "contaminants of emerging concern," meaning that more research is needed. For example, there is not a lot known about how algal blooms, or toxins they can produce, survive and travel downstream from affected lakes.

NMED is actively monitoring conditions within available resources. There are certain things you can do to stay safe and healthy. NMED recommends that if the water smells bad or looks scummy, like grass clippings floating on the surface, thick like paint or pea-green, blue-green, or brownish red in color, it's best to stay out ("when in doubt, stay out").

More information about HABs can be found on NMED's [HABs Webpage](#), in NM Department of Health (NMDOH) HABs [Human Health](#) and [Animal Health](#) factsheets, and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's [Fishing During HABs](#) website.

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