



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.

Toxic algae detected in Quemado Lake *NMED warns visitors not to swim and to keep pets away*

CATRON COUNTY — The New Mexico Environment Department is warning visitors to avoid water contact at Quemado Lake after samples confirmed the presence of harmful algae and toxins.

Harmful algae blooms, or HABs, occur when certain algae grow excessively in water, posing potential health risks to people and animals. HABs can appear blue, bright green, brown or red and may resemble scum or floating grass clippings on the water's surface. These blooms can produce toxins that are harmful to humans and animals.

Samples collected by NMED show the presence of harmful algae and toxins in Quemado Lake. NMED advises visitors to take the following precautions:

- Do not drink untreated surface water.
- Do not swim, wade, paddleboard, or water ski.
- Do not bring dogs or other animals to the lake or hiking areas along its shoreline
- Avoid areas of algae when boating.
- Stay away from algae deposited on the shoreline.
- Rinse fish with clean water prior to cooking thoroughly and eat only the fillet portion.
- Supervise children and prevent them from entering the lake or playing near algae deposited on the shoreline.

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.

NMED continues to actively monitor lake conditions as resources allow. The department reminds the public: 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](#), the New Mexico Department of Health HABs [Human Health](#) and [Animal Health](#) factsheets, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's [Fishing During HABs](#) website.

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