



100 Polk County Plaza • Suite 180 • Balsam Lake, WI 54810 • 715-485-8500 • FAX 715-485-8501

Dec. 15, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Brian Hobbs, RS, Environmental Health Sanitarian, 715/485-8532  
Katelin Anderson, Land and Water Resources 715/485-8637

### Water Quality Advisory: Loveless Lake Algae Bloom

Loveless Lake in Polk County is experiencing extensive algae blooms which are capable of producing toxins that can be dangerous to humans and pets. Exposure to certain types of algae can produce the following symptoms in pets and humans: stomach cramps; diarrhea; vomiting; fever; muscle weakness; difficulty breathing; and seizures. Extreme cases of exposure can lead to liver failure, respiratory failure, and death.

The reddish-purple material growing under the ice in Loveless Lake is a species of blue-green algae called *Planktothrix rubescens*. It contains a red pigment that gives it a reddish-purple appearance. This pigment helps it to survive in low light conditions under the ice. *Planktothrix* is buoyant, so you see it floating near the surface of the water.

*Planktothrix* is a potential toxin producer, so here are some things you can do to reduce your risk of illness from ingesting toxins:

1. Don't drink the lake water, and if you brought your dog out to the lake with you, don't let your dog drink the water either. Always bring clean fresh drinking water.
2. Clean off your hands after handling fish or wetting hands with lake water, and before eating. Use clean fresh water that you brought with you, or wipes.
3. Toxins are more likely to accumulate in organs, so only eat fillets.
4. Rinse fillets well with clean water before cooking or freezing.
5. Blue-green algae can produce "taste and odor" compounds that may give earthy or musty off-flavors to fish living in waters with high blue-green algae levels. These off-flavors are not toxins.

There is more information about blue-green algae, including an email link for reporting blooms, at <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/>. There is health information about blue-green algae at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/bg-algae/index.htm>.

Algae-related impairments to Loveless Lake are being addressed by a restoration plan. There's information on the St. Croix Total Maximum Daily Load Project here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/TMDLs/StCroix.html>