

North Coast Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

2 November 2012

Blue-green Algae - Red Alert issued for Bray Park Weir

Recent sampling of the water in Bray Park Weir has indicated an increased presence of blue-green algae in Bray Park Weir.

The North Coast Regional Algal Coordinating Committee spokesperson, Brian Dodd said today that the warning level for Bray Park Weir has moved from amber to red alert status.

“This red alert has been issued to advise the community and water users upstream of Bray Park Weir to be aware of the situation,” Mr Dodd said.

Tweed Shire Council has been running the Powdered Activated Carbon (PAC) dosing system at the Water Treatment Plant for around one week now to ensure the safety of the town water supply.

“The results of tests indicate Council is effectively removing taste and odour associated with the affects of blue-green algae.”

“Accordingly, we would like to advise landholders that stock should not be allowed to drink from the foreshores and immediately upstream of Bray Park Weir as affected stock may die.”

Dogs are particularly susceptible as they ingest algae by licking their coats.

“There is potential for harmful effects of blue-green algae and the community who use the river for recreation should be aware that contact with the affected water could result in skin rashes, eye and ear irritations.”

“Ingesting the water can lead to diarrhoea and long term health problems. Asthma attacks can also be brought on by contact with blue-green algae.”

There is some evidence that small quantities of algal toxins may enter fish flesh when a bloom produces toxins. Any fish caught in water affected by a bloom should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption.

People should not eat mussels, crayfish or the internal organs of fish from red alert areas.

Tweed Shire Council is monitoring the situation very closely with regular sampling and analysis of the affected water and asks that the public heed the warning signs erected by Council.

“It is with the cooperation of the community that we can mitigate the potential health issues associated with blue-green algae on people and animals,” Mr Dodd added.

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