

## North Coast Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

24 January 2013

### Blue-green algae alert - Lake Ainsworth

The North Coast Regional Algal Coordinating Committee today issued a high level 'red alert' blue-green algae warning for Lake Ainsworth, near Lennox Head.

Sampling at Lake Ainsworth has recorded high levels of potentially toxic blue-green algae.

People should not undertake recreational activities where they may be coming into direct contact with the water such as swimming or boating.

All domestic animals should be kept away, as the potential harmful effects of blue-green algae can cause death in animals.

Blue-green algae can be blown around the lake with the prevailing wind conditions and people are advised to avoid areas where algae is obvious. Areas affected can change rapidly.

Blue-green algae often appears as a green paint-like scum on the water and foreshore edges or clumps throughout the water and usually has a strong earthy odour. This makes the water appear dirty, green or discoloured. However; scums may not be present or visible, especially in windy conditions.

Warning signs have been erected in the affected areas by Ballina Council.

Blue-green algae may cause severe stomach upsets, nausea and skin irritation in people.

Blue-green algae may contain toxins – boiling the water does not remove the toxins produced by the algae.

Common sense would suggest not to consume fish caught in water affected by a bloom. 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.

Ballina Council will continue to monitor the bloom. The public will be advised as the situation changes.

Information about blue-green algae blooms is available from the freecall Algal Information Hotline **1800 999 457** or visit the NSW Office of Water website - **[www.water.nsw.gov.au/algals](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/algals)**.

The current status of Lake Ainsworth is also available on the Ballina Council web site - **[www.ballina.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au)**

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