

Utah Water Watch Field Algae ID Guide

Examples of Cyanobacteria Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs)

Cyanobacteria can be distributed throughout the water or they can float on the surface to form scums on or near the surface. For more images of different forms of cyanobacteria visit this website:

<http://health.utah.gov/enviroepi/appletree/HAB/identify.html>



Up close, cyanobacterial colonies form small clumps (some look like grass-clippings) When conditions are right, cyanobacteria float to the surface to form the thick mats seen below.



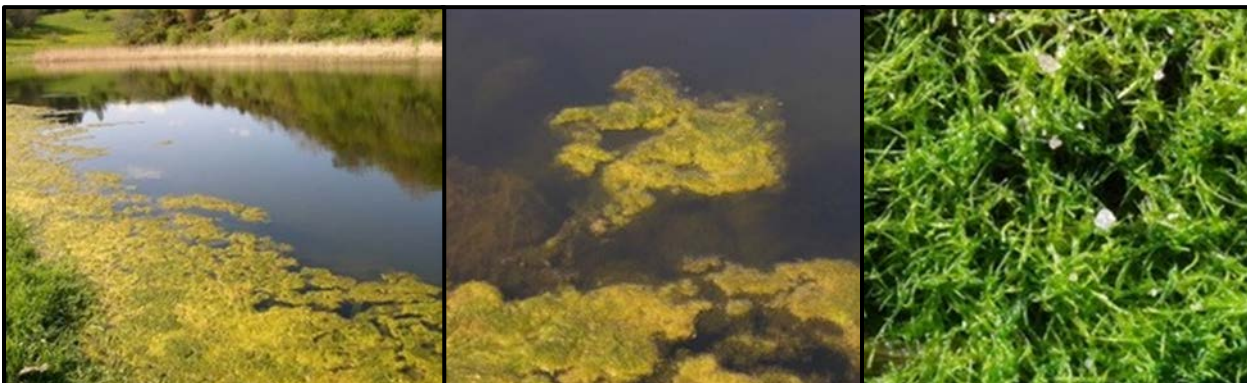
Sometimes HABs only cover a small portion of the lake. Wind blows the cyanobacteria around rocks, green algae mats, or plants.



Often, HABs are described as looking like “spilled paint”, green, white or blue. Their color may change over time; the above photos were all taken at Utah Lake.

Examples of Green Algae Blooms and Duckweed (Harmless)

Not all algal blooms or surface scums are cyanobacteria. Some green algae like *Cladophora* and *Spirogyra* can also create large blooms, but they do not produce harmful algal toxins. **Green algae** come in many forms and may look like underwater moss, thick stringy mats or floating slimy scum. **Duckweed** are tiny aquatic plants with a grainy or couscous-like texture. They may resemble miniature lily pads and are generally beneficial to the environment.



Examples of *Cladophora* green algae blooms.



Examples of *Spirogyra* green algae blooms.



Examples of the aquatic plant duckweed.

Green algae / duckweed Image credit: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.