

Murray and Sunraysia Regional Algal Coordinating Committees

Thursday 8 April 2010

All red alerts removed for the Murray River

The Murray and Sunraysia Regional Algal Coordinating Committees today announced the further downgrading of the 'red alert' for blue-green algae in the Murray River.

Sampling results received today show that algal cell numbers have declined at all sampling sites along the Murray River. This means that the 'red alert' can be lifted completely for all sections of the Murray River.

RACC spokesperson, Owen Russell, said that the lesser 'amber alert' now exists for the entire stretch of Murray River from Hume Reservoir to Wentworth.

"An amber alert means that the waters are safe for all recreational uses such as swimming, water skiing and fishing," he said.

Mr Russell said that the 'red alert' that existed for the Murray River from Mildura to Yelta had declined quickly.

"The blooms experienced in the lower sections of the river from Euston-Robinvale to Wentworth dissipated very quickly."

NSW Office of Water's Bruce Cooper, said that the 2010 bloom had started earlier in the year than the 2009 bloom, both of which lasted approximately six weeks.

"There were a number of factors that caused this bloom including low flows and warm humid weather," said Mr Cooper.

"The RACC partners generally sample for four potentially toxic species of blue-green algae that are commonly found in the inland river systems, plus several others that are much less common."

"The presence of algal blooms during the warmer months is a natural occurrence; however, the two consecutive regional blooms in the Murray have been concerning, and undoubtedly influenced by the ongoing drought in the southern basin," he said.

Mr Cooper said that algal monitoring would be scaled back now that the cooler weather was approaching, but advised that all water users could still obtain the latest information by ringing the free Algal Information Hotline on **1800 999 457** or visit www.water.nsw.gov.au

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